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What impact did US Ballistic Missile Defence have on post-Cold War US-Russian Relations?

Zielke, Ingmar

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**What impact did US Ballistic
Missile Defence have on post-Cold War US-Russian Relations?**

Ingmar Zielke

Reg. No. 0838947

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at King's College London

Abstract

While US ballistic missile defence (BMD) has been identified as a recurring stumbling block in post-Cold War US-Russian relations, its actual impact on the bilateral relationship has not been thoroughly assessed. Through an examination of the diplomatic factors that have underpinned US and Russian missile defence policies from 1999 to 2013, this thesis explains why US BMD was not as destabilising as feared by nuclear experts and scholars of US-Russian relations. Because US ballistic missile defence remained a diplomatic issue, it did not have a significant impact on other fields of cooperation and confrontation. US BMD did not go as far as turning into a central military irritant between the US and Russia.

At the same time, the process of US-Russian missile defence diplomacy fostered a zero-sum outlook in US-Russian relations. While American and Russian policymakers sought to detach US BMD from fields deemed to be more important, diplomatic exchanges on US BMD only perpetuated opaque policy manoeuvres and increased mutual mistrust. In addition, the US-Russian conflict over ballistic missile defence developed into a diplomatic struggle over the post-Cold War European security architecture. The analyses of the role of European NATO states in US-Russian BMD disputes reveal the dysfunctional mechanisms of the post-Cold War institutional settings. As such, European-US-Russian exchanges on US missile defence contributed to the persistence of the Cold War divisions of 'Western'-Russian relations and ingrained a source of recurring conflict.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

US ballistic missile defence (BMD) has, despite persistent predictions to the contrary, ‘survived’ the Cold War and remains at the core of US strategic planning in the 21st century.¹ Originally intended as an instrument to enhance US security against the Soviet Union, missile defence developed into a limited system for theatres of war to counter the remaining, non-democratic ‘rogue states’ of the world. At the end of the 1990s, missile defence turned into a major obstacle in international relations and contributed to an increase in mutual antagonism between the United States and Russia. The US came to argue that out-dated Cold War arms control treaties and a timid United Nations would no longer be sufficient restraints against its enemies (Walker, 2007). The George W. Bush administration developed a unilateral strategy that saw the protection of US territory by means of long-range missile defences as being central to US security (Quaintance, 2009). The idea of the impossibility of deterring ‘rogue states’ coincided with a resurfacing of Cold War nuclear strategists who, like ‘ghosts from the past’, considered the US nuclear deterrent to be insufficient (Deudney and Ikenberry, 2009: 52). The majority of the nuclear expert community argued that a defensive shield would protect the entire territory of the US and its allies and would help to solve the problem of offensive deterrence in a time of non-existential threats (Goure, 2012: 18).

Despite its changed strategic purpose in the post-Cold War period and frequent test failures, US missile defence triggered sharp opposition among potential US competitors, primarily, Russia. US missile defence plans caused a resurfacing of the Cold War stability-instability debate because of the challenges that Washington’s missile defence policy posed to comprehensive arms control regimes. From the mid-2000s on, US missile defence deployment plans in Eastern Europe sharpened US-Russian animosities over the European security order. Diplomatic interactions surrounding US missile defence between the US and Russia shaped inter-state policies and remained one of the stumbling blocks in US-Russian relations (Mankoff, 2012). Lukyanov argued that the issue of missile defence was ‘not a short-term problem that [lends] itself to an

¹ This thesis defines ballistic missile defence as a system that the potential to intercept intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). Ballistic missile defence is interchangeably used with the phrases national missile defence (NMD) and long-range missile defence.

easy deal; it [remained] a fundamental issue of global strategic stability' (Lukyanov, 2012b). Sakwa maintained that the US abrogation of the ABM Treaty in 2001 signified the 'most dangerous strategic failure' in US-Russian relations after the Cold War (Sakwa, 2008: 255). Deudney and Ikenberry argued that one core reason for the post-Cold War 'Western'-Russian relationship of disappointment and unfulfilled expectations is based on Washington's unilateral policies on missile defence (Deudney and Ikenberry, 2009: 49, 51). Mankoff argued that the US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty caused 'deep-seated resentment among the Russian political class [...] Rather than working together to build a new world order [...] Russians blame Washington for taking advantage of the country's weakness [...] to further isolate Russia' (Mankoff, 2012b: 101). For some observers, the unresolved missile defence dispute also raised questions over the willingness of powerful states to resolve secondary security issues. Lukyanov put it as follows:

A non-existent missile defense system against a non-existent threat that provokes an impossible response and interminable and acrimonious discussion—all this is a symbol of the inability of the world political elite to face the real challenges. It is always easier to discuss what is very familiar than what is new and unknown. (Lukyanov, 2012a)

Arbatov highlighted that post-Cold War missile defence discussions between the 'West' and Russia 'resembled a scholastic exercise, detached from any military, political, or technical reality', thereby highlighting the dichotomy between the arguably insignificant military substance of ballistic missile defence (BMD) on the one side and the continuous occupation with the issue on the other side (Arbatov, 2013a: 349). Instead of attempting to curb the horizontal proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (an aim that both sides agreed upon in principle), the missile defence controversy fostered antagonistic domestic attitudes and perpetuated mutual stereotypes. For the past 20 years, based on an understanding of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (Mutimer 2000), Russia and the US continuously emphasised the opportunities that missile defence cooperation would entail (Asker, 1992; Clinton & Yeltsin, 1997; Medvedev, 2009). Based on a common agreement to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, missile defence reflected hopes of Russian, European and American officials of a cooperative security architecture that could have been a major accomplishment in US-Russian relations and, relatedly, to fostering stability in Europe and beyond (Ischinger, 2011). Whereas other fields of confrontation, such as the expansion of NATO, put both sides into an enduring conflict that eventually led to wars and crises, missile defence was in fact originally conceived as a 'binding cooperative bracket' between the US and Russia (Stürmer, 2014).

In addition, US BMD plans contributed to continuous frictions and disputes over the European security space (Fitzpatrick, 2009: 8). The US decision to deploy US missile defence infrastructure in Europe heightened mutual contention over US and Russian influence in Europe. In fact, Monaghan stressed that the issue of missile defence is ‘the lightning rod for the differences in understanding the meaning of the indivisibility of security [in Europe]’ (Monaghan, 2011a: 4).

US missile defence policies, in turn, also affected European NATO countries. Toward the end of the 1990s, European capitals unanimously argued that US national missile defence would be a strategic irritant at best and at worst a dangerous system that would trigger an arms race and decouple the US from European security (Bowen, 2001). European arms control advocates and policymakers recalled the failures of the US-Russian Reykjavik Summit in 1986, in which Gorbachev and Reagan could neither agree on sweeping nuclear reductions nor the potential abolition of long-range nuclear weapons because of US insistence on its Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) (Matlock, 2004: 215–251). Russia’s military countermeasures against US missile defence deployments in Europe, in turn, increased fears among European states regarding Moscow’s rhetorical aggressiveness in response to US BMD deployments in Europe.

The study of the impact of missile defence on US-Russian relations remains necessary, as missile defence continues to play a central role in future bilateral arms control and disarmament efforts between the US and Russia. In fact, Glaser and Fetter argued that the importance of US BMD derives from its connection to Washington’s strategic nuclear policy and its political relationship with Russia (Glaser and Fetter, 2001: 40). As the preamble of the New Start Treaty signed by Obama and Medvedev in 2010 stated, ‘The existence of the interrelationship between strategic offensive arms and strategic defensive arms [...] will become more important as strategic nuclear arms are reduced’ (Obama and Medvedev, 2010).

The unresolved dispute over missile defence has been cited as a core reason for the US-Russian failure to enter into yet another round of nuclear disarmament talks (Schulte, 2013). An analysis of the role and importance of missile defence in US-Russian nuclear arms control negotiations might generate important insights into the role of BMD in future nuclear warhead reductions.

The character of US-Russian relations remains relevant because the management of great power relations continues to be pivotal for the post-Cold War international security order. Whereas Jervis previously argued that great power relations entered a peaceful era (Jervis, 2005), the last

decade shows that conflicts of interest between the US and Russia remains a central global security challenge. At the same time, Sakwa identified the lack of integration of great powers such as Russia and China into the global order as the ‘most important problem of our era’ (Sakwa, 2008: 266). The Russian-Georgian War in 2008, the US-Russian disputes regarding the political developments in Ukraine, and the foreign interventions in the Syrian civil war re-emphasised the focus on military resolve in great power relations. Assessing the role and impact of a central stumbling block in post-Cold War US-Russian relations could contribute to the formation of a clearer understanding of why both states failed to reach agreements on military and political developments over the past two decades.

Third, as the global US missile defence infrastructure critically depended on European consent and because the missile defence debate between the US and Russia was characterised by geostrategic competition over the territory of the former Warsaw Pact, this thesis focuses on the European role in US-Russian missile defence diplomacy. The study of missile defence promises to generate insights into the proceedings of deliberations and overtures in the Euro-Atlantic security sphere after the Cold War.

Initially, the NATO-Russia Founding Act in 1997 and the inauguration of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002 sought to adjust the relationship between European NATO states, Russia, and the US. The 1997 Founding Act maintained the following:

Based on an enduring political commitment undertaken at the highest political level, [NATO and Russia] will build together a lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro-Atlantic area on the principles of democracy and cooperative security (NATO, 1997).

The 2002 NATO-Russia Council was designed to build an:

Effective forum for consensus-building, consultations, joint decisions and joint actions. [NATO and Russia] enter into this new level of cooperation with a great sense of responsibility and equally great resolve to forge a safer and more prosperous future for all our nations. (NATO, 2002)

However, developments in the post-Cold War era pitted former Warsaw Pact states, for which engagement with ‘Western’ institutions signalled an elevation from their former ‘subaltern’ status, and Russia, for which the transcendence of Cold War dependencies meant the precise opposite, against each other (Sakwa, 2008: 243). At the same time, as Lieven argued, the United States found it difficult to act as a satisfied power in the post-Cold War era, and thus sought to

establish a dominant role as a European and global security provider (Lieven, 2002: 247). In turn, Russia's failure to extract benefits from bandwagoning with the US spurned Moscow's willingness to not allow the US to simply ignore Russia (Mankoff, 2012b: 131). Russia grew increasingly wary of NATO enlargement and the perceived encirclement by the stationing of military equipment at Russia's borders (Monaghan, 2008: 723–724). The current US-Russian friction over Ukraine makes it clear that the Euro-Atlantic institutions have fallen short of the above cited expectations. Because US BMD stood in the focus of US-Russian European security deliberations, a study of the procedures for missile defence in NATO-Russian relations can help to gain insights into the shortfalls of the Euro-Atlantic security framework.

Research question and findings of the thesis

The thesis aims at accounting for the role of US BMD in international diplomacy and the impact of US BMD on US-Russian post-Cold War relations. Current analyses on the international role of US BMD are vague with regard to in-depth assessments of US-Russian post-Cold War relations. They do not distinguish particular fields in which US BMD had an impact on bilateral relations and where it has not affected US-Russian relations. By arguing that missile defence has been a general stumbling block in post-Cold War US-Russian relations, scholars do not account for the characteristics and role of missile defence in the broader framework of US-Russian relations. While numerous studies of military and domestic variables exist, they do not consider policy preferences of American and Russian foreign policymakers and therefore fall short of contextualising BMD as a political tool in international diplomacy. An understanding of the politicised nature of US BMD and considerations behind Moscow and Washington's policy preferences is essential for understanding BMD's international role and impact.

To expose the actual post-Cold War role of US BMD in US-Russian relations, the thesis asks how and in what particular fields US BMD affected the US-Russian relationship. The findings of the thesis suggest that the diplomatic role of US BMD in US-Russian relations outweighed its military and arms control-related importance. US BMD did not have a destabilising impact on US-Russian nuclear (dis-)armament, nor did it seriously influence other fields of cooperation and confrontation. Pivotal areas of US-Russian relations, such as cooperation on preventing nuclear proliferation to states like Iran or North Korea and conventional arms reductions, remained untouched by missile defence disputes. Likewise, the lingering lack of agreement on missile defence policies did not prevent cooperation in other fields, such as Russia's institutional rapprochement with NATO in the early 2000s. The thesis challenges common interpretations

that have cited US BMD as a major reason for the downturn in US-Russian post-Cold War relations.

At the same time, the claim that US BMD had an insignificant impact on US-Russian relations must be substantiated with regard to three fields. First, diplomatic interactions in the field of missile defence fostered mutual mistrust. The emerging mistrust led to zero-sum behaviour in diplomatic exchanges on nuclear related issues; heightened the importance for face saving solutions; and increased the gap between secretive policy aims and public statements. As the bilateral US-Russian post-Cold War relationship was not only shaped by incompatible security interests, but also by concepts such as 'respect', 'honour', 'fair treatment', fears of repeating 'Gorbachevian capitulationism', and American quests to become the 'global policeman' (Lieven, 2002; Tsygankov, 2012), the handling of US-Russian diplomacy defined and shaped the bilateral relationship. As such, the impact of missile defence policies on US-Russian relations was based on psychological repercussions, such as the fostering of stereotypes, the perpetuation of deceitful encounters, and a hardening of willingness to compromise on matters related to missile defence.

Second, among foreign policy officials and domestic security elites, the strife surrounding missile defence fostered a mind-set that regarded the other side as increasingly unreliable and irrational. US BMD contributed to the preservation of antagonistic domestic debates on Russia and the United States, depriving the domestic security environment from perceiving the other side in a more positive light.

While missile defence heightened geopolitical antagonisms in Europe from the mid-2000s on, the core challenge with regard to US-Russian relations was not the positioning of missile defence per se, but the expansion of the United States into the territory of new NATO member states by deploying missile defences in Eastern Europe. It is no coincidence that long-range missile defences only formed a small part of Putin's remarkable speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference (Putin, 2007b). While Putin compared the placement of missile defence in Poland and the Czech Republic with the Cuban Missile Crisis, it was obvious that a US-Russian nuclear confrontation was not a realistic possibility in the post-Cold War era (Putin, 2007b; Traynor, 2007). Nevertheless, continuous disputes and the ensuing diplomatic confrontations over US BMD deployments on European soil increased dichotomies between the US and Russia and devalued cooperative efforts in the NATO-Russia Council. The hostile missile defence

diplomacy dynamic between the US and Russia resulted in efforts by both the US and Russia to win over European opinions, eventually developing into zero-sum exchanges of threats and dishonest cooperation efforts to seek European consent. While US missile defence policies deepened the discord between European NATO member states and Russia, Europe's centrality in the BMD field lay in its role in shaping American and Russian foreign policy strategies.

With regard to the European role in the US-Russian BMD dispute, the thesis shows that the very existence of NATO and the continuous support for the coherence of the alliance among its member states did not allow for a more ambitious integration of Russia into US-European security deliberations. European states were unable to formulate a more independent policy on missile defence because of the foreign policy fragmentation of European NATO states. Various critical allies of missile defence pursued a bandwagoning approach with the US because the overall presence of America remained a central security aim for NATO member states. As the second and third case studies will show, the inclusion of former Warsaw Pact states into the transatlantic alliance narrowed US options when it sought a more comprehensive agreement with Russia, as Washington was blamed for pursuing an 'unwarranted appeasement of Moscow' (Troitskiy, 2013). At the same time, American and Russian attempt to influence the policies of European NATO states deepened the mistrust between Russia and the US. The thesis shows the limitations of the Euro-Atlantic security space in terms of reaching a common understanding of security-related challenges in the spirit of mutual agreements and the negative impact of US BMD deployments in Europe on US-Russian relations.

The persistent relevance of Ballistic Missile Defence

Missile defence retained a centrality in US-Russian relations because the process of discussions in the realm of missile defence was as important as the substance being discussed. The thesis shows the limitations of international diplomacy based on a 'rational', single variable pursuit of interests. As Marshall argued, political interactions remain affected by process and substance, as well as 'national interests and pressures and [...] an understanding of the prevailing international conditions in which those recommendations would have to be applied' (Marshall, 1999: 3).

The shifting international order from bipolarity to unipolarity and the resulting frictions between a declining state and a rising global power enhanced missile defence conflicts.² The shift in the

² While the concepts of polarity form the background of theoretical literature in International Relations theory, the thesis will not engage in a discussion on neo-realism and its predictions for state behaviour. It merely notes that the

overall balance of international power explains Russia's determination to retain as much influence as possible on the foreign policy course of the US and Washington's willingness to subjugate US-Russian relations to broader security interests. Moreover, much of the contempt of both sides was based on divergent interpretations and narratives of the end of the Cold War that also affected missile defence policies and, particularly, the failure to come to long-term cooperative solutions. Whereas George H. W. Bush in the early 1990s maintained that 'we prevailed, they didn't' (Bush and Scowcroft, 1998: 4), Gorbachev simultaneously alleged that 'nobody should believe the nonsense that any of the sides has been the winner of the "Cold War"' (Gorbachev in Galkin and Tschernjajew, 2011: 440, Doc. 96). Whereas the majority of US policymakers tended to perceive Russia as the loser of the Cold War and an internally fragile state that should be increasingly side-lined to give Washington a free hand in international policies and military interventions, for the majority of Russia's policymakers, Moscow had voluntarily decided to cede East-West confrontations. Despite 'Western' promises to the contrary, the US and its allies had exploited Russia's weakness to gain unilateral advantages. Whereas Russia's economy might have fallen behind, in military terms Russia remained a great power and was predisposed to negotiating and seeking compromises on an equal footing with the US.

Whereas the likelihood of a nuclear war had virtually disappeared, the political value of nuclear weapons policies as an element of status remained in place, thereby contributing to the continuous importance of nuclear arsenals in US-Russian relations. Lukyanov concluded the following:

As a political factor, nuclear weapons will survive and all accompanying discussions will continue, but we should be aware that this is a parallel dimension linked with—but not coinciding with—the main dimension in which international events happen. (Lukyanov 2012)

The centrality of nuclear diplomacy was heightened by Moscow's willingness to employ nuclear weapons issues as a means of fostering its great power status. In Moscow's domestic security debates, nuclear weapons remained a central symbol for Russia's capability to preserve its status as a great power.

shifts in actual economic and military capabilities, as well as the perceptions on the developments of international resolve, shaped US and Russian policies.

The importance of nuclear diplomacy was also perpetuated because of Washington's ambitious post-Cold War nuclear policy principles that supported a forward-leaning international role of the US. The George W. Bush administration saw the nuclear 'triad' of offensive and defensive weapons as a means to foster a US-based global security order. The nuclear postures of Washington either sought to preserve mutually assured destruction paradigms or to subdue nuclear equality with Moscow in favour of American predominance (McDonough, 2006c; Lieber & Press, 2006; Spear, 2011).

Another important factor for the importance of missile defence in bilateral relations was the centrality of missile defence in domestic deliberations. The US Congress, the State Duma and the Russian military pressurised the executives on both sides into more antagonistic foreign policy stances on missile defence, thereby at times limiting the resolve in international missile defence policymaking. In the US in particular, missile defence was also employed as a means to undermine the authority of the leadership in power.³ At the same time, the formulation of nuclear policies in the post-Cold War era were arguably more widely diffused among domestic actors than was the case in the more centralised foreign policy formulations throughout the Cold War. Bureaucracies and domestic interest groups gained a more central role in formulating missile defence and nuclear policies (Samson, 2007). Because domestic interest groups such as the legislatures and the military industrial complexes were able to impose their antagonistic views on missile defence, the executives of both states were at times constrained in their attempts to find solutions on missile defence issues. This suggests that, in the nuclear realm, Cold War-like mind-sets and institutional conservatism among lawmakers were significant causes for bilateral stumbling blocks when the executives were more at times open to compromises and mutual agreements.

Lastly, the centrality of missile defence in US-Russian relations was maintained because Cold War diplomatic forums on discussing nuclear-related issues remained in place after the end of the Cold War. Nuclear policies remained within the confines of 'old diplomacy', which is defined as state-to-state interactions on the presidential or ministerial level, as opposed to 'new diplomacy', which emphasises economic concerns, social implications, and a general multiplicity of actors including the media, lobbies, non-governmental organisations, and politicians (for a

³ The usefulness of missile defence as a tool to foster domestic and foreign policy agendas by divergent interest groups was greatly exacerbated by the complex technical nature of missile defence, which only a handful of technological experts understood—and even they diverged on the capabilities of the system. As a result of the complex nature of the defensive system, arguments on missile defence were turned into the respective directions of multiple interest groups without them being discounted by clear evidence to the contrary.

critical account of the concept, see Sofer, 1988). The fact that nuclear and missile defence policies continued to be the subject of high-ranking intergovernmental discussions contributed to the preservation of confrontational political interactions. At the same time both the US and Russia arguably regarded international terrorism, interpretations of state sovereignty, and the role of the United Nations, the European security order, horizontal proliferation, nuclear terrorism, and the rise of regional adversaries as being more important for the global security agenda than fears of nuclear 'windows of opportunities' and the deployment of multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles on nuclear missiles (MIRVing). In fact, the first case study will show that the US actively encouraged Russia to continue the development of MIRVed missiles to preserve strategic stability

Case selection and time frame

The thesis seeks to account for the central research question on the impact of US BMD on the US-Russian relationship by analysing the three most contentious periods in the area of missile defence diplomacy after the Cold War from a US and Russia diplomatic-foreign policy perspective. The analyses will account for the potential fields of the impact of US BMD on US-Russian relations by looking at military-arms control, geo-strategic, political, and diplomatic factors that underlined BMD policies.⁴ This will allow for a clearer understanding of the precise impact of BMD.

By pursuing an in-depth case study approach, the thesis discusses a politically important outcome and develops a line of argument; assessing this argument across time, it seeks to document phenomena, through interview data and documentary sources, that been insufficiently studied in order to provide in-depth description and explanation (Katzenstein et al., 1996: 65–68). As Hudson notes, actor-specific studies require an in-depth case study approach, recognising that many factors will be non-quantifiable (Hudson, 2005: 14). The case study approach of the thesis is thus inductive; it aims to explain, describe, understand, and interpret a single case study as an end in itself rather than as a vehicle to develop broader theoretical generalisations (Levy, 2008: 4). It does not seek to extract a single variable to make sense of missile defence policies, but explains all aspects of a case, as well as its interconnections. It follows Gerring's definition that a case studies is an 'intensive study of a single case where the

⁴ The thesis does not focus on reasons why Russia felt threatened by US BMD. It also abstains from analysing the intricate domestic policies on US BMD in Washington D.C. and Moscow, even though it does refer to some domestic debates to account for the influential factors of the formulation of BMD policies in the international realm.

purpose of the study is [...] to shed light on a larger class of cases'. It primarily does so for a generalisation of US and Russian post-Cold War diplomacy in US BMD policies (Gerring, 2007: 19–20).

To analyse how missile defence affected US-Russian relations, the thesis will divide the case studies into three sections. The initial analyses will focus on the broader relationship and general foreign policies of the respective actors, as well as their nuclear policy preferences and domestic factors. At the same time, policies on US BMD can only be comprehensively interpreted if contentions over the post-Cold War nuclear order, US unilateralism, and the European security space form the background of the analysis, as it helps to situate the importance of BMD policies into a broader context.

The findings from the general factors underlying missile defence policies will then be included in missile defence policy assessments. The assessments of missile defence policies aim to reveal the actual political considerations behind diplomatic manoeuvres. To account for the impact of US BMD on the bilateral relationship, it is necessary to situate the US BMD issue in a broader foreign policy context at particular moments in time. This will help to clarify when and why US BMD took centre stage in US-Russian diplomatic antagonisms and why it was repeatedly subjugated to a second order issue despite unresolved questions regarding US missile defence policies. The in-depth scope of these sections can also help to reveal shifting priorities in missile defence policies and will aid in distinguishing tactical manoeuvres on missile defences from more significant considerations. While this approach could fall short of distinguishing tactical diplomatic manoeuvres from fundamental issues in bilateral missile defence discourse, the thesis aims at narrowing the factors that shaped missile defence policies by analysing official statements and existing secondary literature.⁵

At the same time, the aim of the case studies is not to solely extract the missile defence agendas of both sides, but to extract the process of missile defence negotiations to allow for an assessment of the impact on bilateral relations. As Marshall highlighted, in diplomacy, 'Process affects substance just as language affects thought' (Marshall, 1999: 1). If diplomacy is as much shaped by process as by substance the focus on interactions can yield valuable insights into the process of diplomacy between NATO member states and Russia, and does thereby generate important insights with regard to the impact of US BMD on US-Russian relations.

⁵ In fact, Elman and Elman highlighted that 'statesmen almost always have a hidden agenda, especially in foreign policy; prevailing conventions in diplomacy expect and allow for it' (Elman and Elman, 2001: 412).

The following impact sections of each US-Russian case study pursue two aims. By referring to other fields of confrontation and cooperation, the individual case studies will explore the repercussions of missile defence disputes on other fields in US-Russian and NATO-Russian relations. By analysing the role of missile defence in other areas of US-Russian relations, the sections generate important information about the overall impact of missile defence on US-Russian relations. Second, based on the analysis of different factors shaping missile defence policies and an interpretation of missile defence diplomacy, the sections clarify the impact of missile defence interactions deriving from the process of missile defence diplomacy.

The first case study will look at the repercussions of BMD in the run-up and aftermath of the cancellation of the ABM Treaty in late 2001. From 1999 to 2002, the US chose to reintroduce the concept of territorial missile defence, thus bringing the disputes surrounding Ronald Reagan's 'Star Wars' back to the centre of US-Russian relations. For IR scholars, the abrogation of the ABMT in 2002 formed one of the major hindrances in US-Russian post-Cold War relations (Deudney & Ikenberry, 2009).

The second case study will focus on the European Missile Crisis in 2007 that was triggered by the George W. Bush administration's plan to deploy US missile defence infrastructure in Poland and the Czech Republic. The inclusion of Poland and the Czech Republic in the US system formed a watershed moment for US-Russian hostilities over missile defence. Throughout this period, missile defence deployment plans developed into a central geopolitical conflict over US and Russian influence in former Warsaw Pact states.

The third case study discusses the missile defence 'revolution' between NATO and Russia from 2009 to 2013. For the first time, NATO endorsed cooperation on long-range missile defence systems with Moscow. Moreover, missile defence shifted into the focus of the US-Russian 'reset', thereby becoming inextricably linked with its failure. The overtures made between Obama and Medvedev and Putin offer a rich landscape for analysing the pitfalls of US-Russian military-to-military cooperation in the post-Cold War era.

The timeframe of the thesis is based on multiple considerations. Firstly, the US Ballistic Missile Defence Act of 1999 signalled a revival of the disputes between the Soviet Union and the US in the 1980s and changed the initial post-Cold War understanding of solely deploying short-range

defences that would be within the confines of the 1972 ABM Treaty. Discussions between the US and Russia throughout the 1990s were initially based on finding a compromise over what would constitute short-range tactical missile defences. Whereas some of the decisions taken by the US contradicted Russian interpretations of what would constitute short-range defences, Washington was willing to accept the limitations of the 1972 ABM Treaty. The Missile Defence Act of 1999, however, directly challenged the major nuclear arms control treaty of the Cold War. The time between 1999 and 2001, when the US abrogated the ABM Treaty, constitutes the first major US-Russian confrontation with regard to the post-Cold War international nuclear regime and the issue of missile defence.

The year 2013 constitutes the end of the exploration of the post-Cold War role of missile defence because of the official termination of US-Russian and NATO-Russian dialogues on missile defence issues. Russia's rejection to negotiate another bilateral nuclear arms control treaty with the US in 2013, along with Moscow's decision to cede all attempts to cooperate on BMD in the NATO-Russia Council framework, marked the official end of the nuclear reset between Washington and Moscow. To this day, Moscow's decision of 2013 to reject any nuclear-related discussions with the US as long as Washington would continue its missile defence deployments has not changed. To the knowledge of the author, no official US-Russian and NATO-Russian discussions on BMD have taken place in the past three years, which has deprived the author of analysing US-Russian BMD diplomacy and its impact on US-Russian relations. The determination with which Moscow eventually ceded to discuss nuclear and missile defence issues in 2013 suggests that US-Russian relations reached a low point before the ongoing Ukrainian crisis.

All three major case studies will be followed by separate analyses of the European role in US-Russian missile defence diplomacy and its impact on US-Russian and, by extension, NATO-Russian relations. European security issues and missile defence disputes with regard to Europe's rightful role in the Euro-Atlantic post-Cold War security architecture have been at the core of US-Russian crises in the post-Cold War era.

In the late 1990s, European NATO states were among the fiercest opponents of US BMD policies. European states were central to Russian efforts to circumvent the abrogation of the ABM Treaty. From the early 2000s on, Washington pursued plans to station a third missile

defence site on European soil. This contentious proposition threatened to undermine NATO-Russian relations.

The thesis argues that US BMD plans to station BMD sites in Europe contributed to repetitive US-Russian antagonisms and shows that US-Russian relations on BMD have been inextricably linked to the European security space. As European NATO states played a crucial role in the US-Russian missile defence standoff and shaped American and Russian diplomatic strategies, the thesis considers an understanding of NATO-Russian BMD policies crucial for extracting the impact of US BMD on US-Russian relations. The interpretation of the diplomatic manoeuvres of the United States, Russia, and European capitals in this triangular relationship allows for an in-depth look at the mechanisms of post-Cold War Euro-Atlantic security developments, in turn generating important insights into the diplomatic antagonisms in US-Russian BMD discussions. In addition, looking at European developments in the sphere of US BMD adds an additional perspective on the diplomatic strategies and policy manoeuvres of the US and Russia. This approach makes interpretations of American and Russian strategies and their impacts on US-Russian relations in the field of missile defence more viable.

As the thesis will argue, US BMD contributed to fragmentation between NATO states and Russia, thereby undermining the development of a more inclusive Euro-Atlantic security agenda. The very existence of NATO and the continuous support for the coherence of the alliance among its member states did not allow for a more ambitious integration of Russia into the NATO member states' security deliberations. The thesis finds that European NATO states were unable to formulate a consistent policy on missile defence because of the dominant role of the US in formulating European security policies and the fragmentations of European positions on missile defence. The European weakness in formulating an independent position on US BMD deployments, in turn, decreased the value of European NATO states for Russian policymakers who regarded the US as the central actor in the conduct of BMD policies in Europe. As such, the importance of Europe remained limited in US-Russian disputes over missile defence.

The first European case study (1999-2002) will focus on the United Kingdom, France, and Germany as the three central actors in Europe's foreign policy approach. Between 1999 and 2002, all three European NATO states supported a more independent, European approach to international affairs. US plans to use European radar sites for its long-range defences challenged the sovereignty in the formulation of independent European foreign policy preferences. All

three major European powers eventually accepted the US abrogation of the ABM Treaty, thus signalling the reservations to siding with Russia.

For the second and third case studies, Poland and Germany have been picked as the key actors in European policies toward BMD. Germany and Poland represented the two extremes of opposites in NATO European policies. Whereas Poland shifted into the centre of attention because of Washington's plans to move missile defence interceptors into former Warsaw Pact states, Germany remained the most critical NATO state in terms of US missile defence plans in Europe. From 2009, Poland was the most critical state regarding Obama's European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA), whereas Germany led an effort among NATO states to change the nuclear Cold War dynamics between Russia and NATO.

Methodology

The methodology of the thesis follows Trachtenberg's advice to use open primary source research such as newspaper and magazine accounts accessed through *NEXIS*, *Johnson's Russia list*, and the *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* and *Ria Novosti*, statements by government officials, and other official documents for research into recent historical events (Trachtenberg, 2006: 249). Primary sources will be predominantly used for measuring the impact of missile defence on state-to-state relations, as they outline specific official assessments regarding the role of missile defence in bi- and multilateral relations. A range of actors are included in the analysis, including administration officials, bureaucrats, Congress and Duma, analytical elites, and non-governmental foreign policy organisations with arguably significant influence on the shaping or delivery of policy. In addition, US-Russian relations heavily relied on presidential summits. Because of the lack of institutionalised departmental relationships, the personal policy positions of the president are important, with the overall approach toward Russia being set by the executive branch (Goldgeier & McFaul, 2003; Deyermond, 2013: 503; Stent, 2014: 260). This also accounts for Russia, where the executive defined the policy approaches toward Washington (Breslauer, 2009). The inclusion of the actors cited above will rely on primary source material, in particular newspaper articles and official statements. Secondary sources such as expert analyses and assessments from political scientists support primary sources with regard to other issues, such as complications in the framework of cooperative US-Russian BMD efforts and broader US-Russian relations. Analyses of political scientists such as Richard Sakwa, Andrei Tsygankov, and Dmitri Trenin will help to put bilateral relations in a broader context, whereas analyses by

Vladimir Dvorkin, Pavel Podvig, or Ted Postol seek to clarify the technological nature of US BMD programmes and Russia's military responses.⁶

Whereas the author recognises the problematic character of elite interviews with regard to bias, exaggeration, and false memories, the thesis relies on 30 semi-structured interviews with diplomats and retired diplomats, as well as military and political experts from the US, Russia, Germany, Poland, and the NATO headquarters in Brussels. The semi-structured interviews form supplementary evidence, with written primary and secondary sources forming the evidential core of the thesis. As Beamer noted, elite interviews offer potential for richer description of political processes and, more importantly, are valid data for inferential purposes. As such, they serve as a tool to tap into political constructs that may otherwise be problematic to examine (Beamer, 2002: 87). Elite interviews generate unique data to explore the complexities of politics and policies and reconstruct political episodes, corroborating accounts of events, and gleaning information on the decision-making process (Richards, 1996). The assessment of (retired) diplomats who participated in missile defence consultations will form an important source regarding the assessment of missile defence policies and their impact on inter-state relations.

Second, whereas the author recognises the biased character of non-governmental experts, think-tank-based military and political experts served as useful sources to shed light into US and Russian policy conduct. Various analysts either closely followed missile defence policies or have been involved in official discussions in the framework of the NATO-Russian Council or US-Russian negotiations on missile defence policies. Non-governmental experts have been useful for interpreting US and Russian missile defence policies, because their non-governmental ties allowed them to be more outspoken about the policy manoeuvres of both sides.

For the assessment of broader foreign policy aims, as well as bi- and multilateral relations, the thesis employs large amounts of secondary source material. This material includes peer-reviewed foreign affairs journals; monographs from scholars focusing on Russia, the US, and NATO; pamphlets and conference proceedings accessed from the Institute for International Security

⁶ The author recognises the potentially biased nature of technical experts on missile defence. To account for the lack of more independent sources of a highly politicised military programme, their opinions and analyses are nevertheless included in the background sections of each case study. To avoid an overt reliance of technical experts, their opinions on US BMD only form the background of the case studies; they do not interfere with the diplomatic exchanges on US-Russian missile defence policies and the analyses of the impact of such exchanges on the bilateral relationship.

Studies (IISS); and US, European, and Russian think tanks, such as the Moscow based Institute for World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Brookings Institute, the Polish Institute for International Affairs, and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Various US and Russian nuclear and missile defence experts, such as Mankoff (CSIS), Podvig (Stanford University), and Sokov (Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation) published extensively on missile defence. Their expertise will form the background of assessments of US and Russian policies.

The thesis also uses biographies and memoirs of the decision makers and policy makers involved in international bargaining concerning missile defence and nuclear arms control. The viewpoints of officials involved in missile defence discussions will contribute to the assessment of the impact of US and Russian missile defence policies on the bilateral relationship. Lastly, the thesis will include Wikileaks material.

Limits of research

Because of the relatively recent developments in missile defence policies, this thesis cannot base its findings on archival material from American, European, and Russian sources. It narrows its findings by incorporating multiple factors that informed missile defence policies, but it cannot provide ‘smoking gun’ evidence. As in other interpretative accounts on international relations in the post-Cold War era, the opening of archival sources could disprove claims made in the thesis.⁷

The challenge of extracting valuable insights into BMD diplomacy in the post-Cold War era is to distinguish the strategic-military importance of BMD from political gambits and symbolic diplomacy on both sides. The thesis accounts for the domestic and foreign policy pressures on missile defence policies and narrows explanations for Russian and US actions by incorporating broader foreign policy aims into the analysis. However, it could fall short of determining how far missile defence was tactically used by both executives to foster specific policy aims and how far presidents were themselves pressured by domestic bureaucratic deliberations. For example, the degree to which the Kremlin’s decision-making on missile defence was informed by worst-case military threat assessments used as a public policy tool to bolster Russian anti-Americanism, foster Russia’s international status as a great power, and draw the US into a prolongation of

⁷ Lilly, 2014b; Stent, 2014; Absent archival sources, Trachtenberg argued that scholars of International History and International Relations should use press resources, official statements and documents, as well as secondary sources, to analyse recent international developments (Trachtenberg, 2006: 249).

Cold War arms control approaches cannot be entirely determined, even though official statements by the Russian civilian leadership suggests that US missile defence was not regarded as a central military challenge. In addition, establishing the detailed reasoning behind US policymakers in the foreign policy realm is difficult.

The findings of the thesis suggest that the impact of BMD was detrimental to more stable bilateral relations in the sphere of military-to-military cooperation and European security issues, but that it had a very limited impact on US-Russian relations. However, at the same time, it is possible that the strongly negative domestic deliberations on missile defence policies had an indirect impact on bilateral relations by making US and Russian foreign policies less cooperative. As human behaviour depends on a complex multitude of factors (Schroeder, 1997), it is possible that policymakers were affected by indirect, potentially long-term repercussions of BMD disputes. For example, while the research into the Russian-Georgian War in 2008 suggests that it was not linked to simultaneous disputes on missile defence, it could have been the case that Moscow's policymakers were conducting their policies on less compromising premises because they translated experiences from bilateral missile defence consultations into the notion that assertiveness was the only option to halt Washington's perceived expansion into former Soviet territory.

In the past decades, US-Russian post-Cold War relations were based on 'rational' interests in foreign policymaking (Sakwa, 2007; Stent, 2005; Lynch, 2001; Craig, 2004) as much as they derived from factors such as prestige, status, identity, and domestic policies (Shearman, 2001: 256; Monaghan, 2008; Trenin, 2005b: 289; Tsygankov, 2009a; Sakwa, 2008: 250). Whereas missile defence was influenced by realpolitik factors as well as softer psychological factors, the thesis finds that policymakers were at least able to detach the former from the latter. This finding implies that both executives were at times able to pursue rational short-term policies based on their perceived interests at particular moments. However, the author is aware of the practical limitations of distinguishing the primacy of foreign policy ('Primat der Aussenpolitik'), with its assumptions of situational ad-hoc rationality of political leaders, and the primacy of domestic policies ('Primat der Innenpolitik'), with its emphasis on long-term factors such as ideology and societal considerations in the formulation of foreign policies (for a comprehensive overview of both concepts see Simms, 1997: 2–8). Whereas the domestic factors of US and Russian missile defence policies are indicative for explaining missile defence policies in the

international realm, this thesis predominantly focuses on foreign policy behaviours in the field of missile defence.

A final substantiation must be made with regard to the in-depth study of Russia's domestic deliberations on US BMD policies. Although domestic analyses on US and Russian considerations predominantly serve as a background for explaining foreign policy conduct, they are nevertheless instructive for a clearer understanding of the dynamics in the field of BMD policies. The thesis follows Mathers's (2012) approach to incorporate primary Russian sources translated into English when discussing the patterns of the Russian discourse on missile defence. In particular, with regard to the impact sections of each case study, the thesis relies on primary sources (translated into English) by Russian foreign policymakers, in particular from the electronic archives of the Russian Presidential website and the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, English translations of articles by the long serving Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, in *Russia in Global Affairs* have been a useful source for Moscow's take on US BMD. Interviews with Russian counterparts were focused on Russia's perceptions of US BMD policies and Moscow's foreign policy responses to account for the central research question on the impact of US BMD on US-Russian relations.

Congressional exchanges on US BMD and numerous publications offer a rich field of research in US policymaking on BMD. Gaining insights into Russian domestic deliberations was a more challenging task, not least because of the absence of archival resources with regard to debates in the Duma (that were according to various interview partners, mostly superficial and limited in content, irrespectively) and the author's language barriers. From the early 2000s on, moreover, debates on missile defence policies shifted into the executive branch of the Russian government (as discussed in chapter two), making it difficult to track the deliberations of the small group of Russian officials who were involved in BMD policy formulations.

The thesis seeks to counter the dearth of official sources on Russia's domestic BMD debate by giving a broad overview of domestic dynamics deriving from secondary sources. With regard to the second and third case study, analyses from the Moscow-based Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) have been published in English, thus facilitating access to domestic Russian deliberations. Authors of IMEMO studies, such as Vladimir Dvorkin, or independent researchers, such as Pavel Podvig, have long been involved in missile defence discussions and are able to provide a general background of Russian deliberations in English

language publications. Other secondary sources from experts on Russian nuclear policymaking have been included into the analysis. The first case study, in particular, incorporated Russian language articles translated into English (from the *Post Soviet Press Archive (CDRP)* in the British Library in London as well as *Johnson's* online-based *Russia List* and *Ria Novosti*) to provide an overview of the wider debate in Russia. In addition, interview partners served as a useful source to gain more insights into the Russian debate, even though their insights into decision-making processes remained limited. Chapter two offers a broader account of Russian mechanisms and development in the field of missile defence, thereby fostering a clearer understanding of the dynamics of Moscow's domestic decision-making processes on BMD. Lastly, Russian internal debates on BMD have been extensively discussed by Lilly (Lilly, 2014). Her findings have been added to the sections on Russian domestic deliberations on US BMD and contributed to a better understanding of debates in Moscow.

Scholarly contribution and literature review

By employing a foreign policy angle and arguing that both sides pursued interest-based policies on missile defence, the thesis re-adjusts the dominant emphasis of publications on the centrality of domestic and technological deliberations on missile defence policies. Secondly, by resisting the notion that post-Cold War US BMD was primarily a military or security related issue in NATO-Russian relations, the thesis emphasises the importance and repercussions of an overt politicisation of a relatively insignificant military project in post-Cold War great power relations. As such, the thesis contributes to existing research in three divergent ways. First and foremost, it seeks to comprehensively assess the political impact of missile defence on broader US-Russian relations. Whereas missile defence has been identified as an alleged major stumbling block, a detailed study of the impact on the bilateral relationship has not been conducted.

Second, it aims at extracting the diplomatic deliberations behind Russian and US missile defence policies. A more in-depth understanding of missile defence diplomacy can help to contextualise BMD in the broader framework of US-Russian and NATO-Russian relations after the end of the Cold War. The thesis seeks to clarify the seeming contradiction between the declining relevance of Cold War deterrence in the post-Cold War era and the continuous preoccupation with arms control issues in US-Russian relations.

Third, by assessing the role of missile defence in NATO-Russian relations, the thesis contributes to an understanding of the mechanisms of the functioning of the Euro-Atlantic security sphere

in the post-Cold War period. By analysing the diplomatic interactions between the US, Russia, and Europe in the field of missile defence policies, it seeks to fill a gap in scholarly research.

Chapter 2

The historical legacies of Ballistic Missile Defence

The US-Russian dispute on long-range BMDs from the late 1990s on did not emerge in a vacuum. Two important developments preceded the US abrogation of the ABM Treaty in the early 2000s and the controversial stationing of missile defence interceptors in Europe. First, throughout the Cold War, the deployment of missile defences was a core issue of US-Soviet approaches to nuclear arms control and disarmament efforts. As such, policymakers in the post-Cold War era remained influenced by past interactions and concepts on missile defences. Second, throughout the early and mid-1990s, as a result of different interpretations of the ABM Treaty, Moscow and Washington continued to seek compromises on demarcation agreements that would allow for the deployment of short-range missile defence systems while constraining long-range missile defences. Deliberations in Washington threatened to revive the Cold War disputes on appropriate offensive-defensive balance in the field of nuclear policies.

An understanding of the historical legacy of US-Soviet disputes on missile defence systems, as well as an account of the revival of US long-range missile defence plans, is imperative for the interpretation of US and Russian missile defence policies throughout the timeframe of the three case studies in this work. The thesis will refer to the disputes in the field of missile defence by highlighting Cold War-like patterns of behaviour in US and Russian post-Cold War diplomacy. Cold War-like patterns of behaviour refer to approaches by the US and Russia to undermine the missile defence agenda of the other side by means of winning over Europe through diplomatic efforts that would picture the other side in negative terms along with non-transparent diplomatic manoeuvres. Cold War-like patterns of behaviour also refer to the utilisation of international organisations to discredit the other side internationally. Lastly, Cold War-like behaviour also refers to rhetorical threat making with regard to retaliatory military measures by means of a military build-up. While the author is aware of the limitations of generalising diplomatic behaviour throughout the Cold War, not least because of the divergent developments in US-Soviet relations between the mid-1940s and late 1980s (Gaddis, 2008), and seeks to avoid the impression that post-Cold War US-Russian relations can be compared to Soviet-American developments (Monaghan, 2015), the term Cold War-like is used to outline the impact of US BMD on post-Cold War US-Russian diplomatic exchanges, the contrast between initial visions of US and Russian statesmen in the early 1990s and actual diplomatic considerations in post-

Cold War decades, and the repetition of diplomatic strategies in the field of US BMD that had been employed by Soviet and American policymakers in the wake of Reagan's introduction of the Strategic Defence Initiative in the 1980s.

While it would go beyond the scope of this work to engage in a detailed analysis of developments in Russian and American thinking on nuclear-related issues, a brief survey of the strategic tendencies of the US and Russia will help to contextualise the post-Cold War policies on missile defence. The second section of this chapter will deal with the return of long-range BMD in US policymaking in the post-Cold War era. The 1990s saw a revival of the debate on US missile defences after an initial decrease in the early years of the decade. In line with the overall context of foreign policymaking in the 1990s, the issue of national missile defence saw new life through a strengthened Congress and a weakened president in a 'de-centralised' and 'democratised' environment of American foreign policymaking (Scott, 1998). In fact, US and Russian BMD policies from the late 1990s on stemmed from Washington's strategic decisions in the 1990s. As Quaintance highlighted:

The triple threat of terrorism, tyranny and technology was fundamentally the product of longstanding conceptual framing and political argumentation won by conservative strategic culture during the Clinton years and the process of institutionalising counter-proliferation capabilities and practices. (Quaintance, 2009: 261)

Russia's nuclear thinking and Ballistic Missile Defence traditions

For the Soviet Union, nuclear parity with the United States became a way to guarantee its global political influence and its state security. To preserve the prerogatives of mutually assured destruction, Moscow embarked on multiple paths to tie in Washington with regard to nuclear parity, primarily through means of deceptive diplomacy, attempts to sow discord between 'Western' states, and an emphasis on the chances for bilateral nuclear accords to promote global stability and non-proliferation efforts.

From the 1970s on, the Soviet nuclear doctrines shifted toward embracing détente, peaceful coexistence, arms control, and crisis management to limit the danger of a nuclear war (Ermath, 2006: 8). According to Ermath, the Soviet Union's policies on nuclear questions can thus be characterised as 'risk averse' rather than 'risk prone' (Ermath, 2006: 9; also: Mathers, 2000: 65–88; Shoumikhin, 2009; Battilega, 2004). Likewise, Shoumikhin stressed that Soviet thinking in

nuclear matters was informed by a heightened sense of vulnerability (Shoumikhin, 2009: 143). Post-Cold War scholarship echoed the assumption that the core aim of the Soviet Union's nuclear policies from the mid-1960s on has been to reach 'nuclear parity' with Washington while preventing a nuclear war (Zubok, 2010: 108; Battilega, 2004). In the same vein, a comprehensive study based on interviews with Soviet policymakers on nuclear postures concluded that the Soviet Union considered that nuclear weapons had only a limited war fighting capability, and that Moscow's nuclear build-up was primarily related to the avoidance of a nuclear conflict with the United States (Hines et al., 1995a, 1995b).

The principle of strategic stability that emerged as a key component in Soviet nuclear thinking in the late 1960s not only referred to the principle of nuclear parity, it also embraced international accords and regimes on arms control and disarmament (Kassianova, 2005a: 97). In its broadest sense, strategic stability was regarded as a state in which a series of political, economic, and military adjustments would result in the prevention of military aggression. This interpretation implied that neither side would seek to alter its military balance of forces or try (by military means) to establish supremacy over the other side (Dvorkin, 2011: 23–45).

The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972 came to signify a highly symbolic achievement for parity with the US and was regarded as an outstanding achievement in global arms control (Orlov, 2012). As Russian Defence Minister Igor Ivanov maintained in 2000, 'With the ABM treaty at its root, a system of international accords on arms control and disarmament sprang up [that was] inseparable from the process [of] global and regional regimes of non-proliferation' (Ivanov, 2000).

Moreover, according to Shoumikhin, the Soviet leadership concluded from the signing of the ABM Treaty that arms control represented a valuable means of pursuing Soviet strategic goals:

Equalizing capabilities even if one of them lags in [...] technological prowess [was one strategy]. [Moreover, policymakers believed that] success in negotiations would be possible with 'subtle and deceptive moves', and that the linkage between defensive and offensive systems is quintessential in preventing unilateral advantages. (Shoumikhin, 2009: 145)

Likewise, Mathers argued that the Soviet Union aimed for nuclear parity through enhanced diplomatic efforts that employed various tactics and strategies, including the use of deception (Mathers, 2000). Gaddis shown that the nuclear diplomacy of Khrushchev was based on

elements of deception to bolster Soviet resolve (Gaddis, 2008: 90–93). In this regard, diplomacy came to be seen as a promising tool for gaining US concessions in the nuclear field. According to Shoumikhin, throughout the Soviet period, Moscow's arms control and disarmament policies can be characterised as follows:

Day-to-day pragmatism [and the] art of the possible [...] The Soviets developed an elaborate tactic of negotiations based on a pragmatic assessment of Russia's international situation and the use of any window of opportunity to acquire incremental gains (Shoumikhin, 2009: 141).

At the same time, the Soviet Union perceived the diplomatic and political involvement that surrounded nuclear policies as a means to foster global shifts in the balance of power. Arms control was interpreted as a way to constrain the US and its allies from exploiting their technological superiority. The Soviet Union's immediate reaction to Washington's Strategic Defence Initiative in 1983 was the introduction of a new draft treaty that would ban space weapons and the announcement of a unilateral moratorium on further tests of anti-satellite weapons systems (U.N. Doc A/38/194, 1983). Gorbachev's initial nuclear diplomacy at the security summits in Geneva in November 1985 and Reykjavik in October 1986 sought to limit 'Star Wars' by endorsing nuclear disarmament (Podvig, 2013).

Nuclear weapons policies were also regarded as a basis from which the Soviet Union could detach European allies from the US (Ermath, 2006), thereby seeking to exploit Western Europe's negative assessments of the SDI initiative (Rühle, 1983). According to Shoumikhin, the Soviet Union recognised that emphasising disarmament and pacifism could be employed as a means to divide the unity of 'Western' states. Soviet policymakers used rhetoric on nuclear disarmament in a war of ideas ('voina idei') that aimed at encouraging anti-war and anti-nuclear segments of Western populations (Shoumikhin, 2009: 143). Moreover, the Soviet Union also relied on the United Nations, which provided an important stage for the dissemination of disarmament ideas.

In the domestic realm, the few existing analyses of the impact of US missile defence policies show that Soviet responses were greatly complicated by internal disputes. In fact, Podvig suggests that the Soviet leadership, which was in itself divided over the issue, might have regarded the potential pressure by the military industrial complex as being as disturbing as the SDI initiative itself (Podvig, 2013). Despite the doubts of leading scientists with regard to the space-based and laser-based technology of US missile defence, the military industry and parts of

the military employed the dangers of a technological military revolution, seeking to influence the civilian leadership's stance in negotiations with the United States (Westwick, 2008).

In addition, Moscow's policies on US missile defence remained closely linked to the more general direction of the bilateral relationship. Despite the continuation of the US programme in the late 1980s, Moscow eventually delinked missile defence issues from other important nuclear arms control initiatives, such as the conclusion of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 1987. Leading policymakers came to regard the initial Soviet response as counterproductive. Anatoly Chernyaev, advisor to Gorbachev, recalled that 'we've short-sightedly become fixated on the U.S.'s military space research programs, making their termination a condition for success in Geneva. They've driven us into a corner here' (Chernyaev, 2012: 32). To not endanger the conclusion of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), Gorbachev was willing to delink offensive and defensive systems in the START I Treaty in 1991 (Shoumikhin, 2009).

Russia's post-Cold War policies remained linked to past historical experiences. Cimbala stressed that Russia's interpretation of its history contributed to a sensitive security climate, in particular with regard to potential 'Western' aggression (Cimbala, 2008). As Tsypkin argues, because Russia experienced so much destruction in the 20th century, it was at times incomprehensible to Moscow why the US would be so sensitive about the vulnerability of its homeland from a few potential missiles from 'rogue' states (Tsypkin, 2009: 791). Russia's nuclear policies have also been based on the premises of parity and Moscow's self-perceived status as a great power (Sakwa, 2008: 267). According to Ermath, this perception has been coupled with an inferiority complex that only intensified with the breakup of the Soviet Union, especially among Russian national security elites (Ermath, 2006: 7).

At the same time, Russian military and civilian assessments on nuclear and security issues substantially evolved in the post-Cold War era. Official Russian documents shifted away from focusing on conventional and nuclear large-scale wars toward an expansion of the definition of security to include domestic and local armed conflicts and economic decline. The shifts were as much driven by the economic situation of the Russian Federation and domestic battles over power in the security apparatus as they were an outcome of national (Chechnya) and international (NATO expansion) developments (de Haas, 2001). Most military leaders of Russia's strategic forces continued to regard strategic stability as an inclusive phenomenon, which, in addition to offensive weapons, included command, control, and communication

systems, early-warning systems, conventional weapons with strategic capability, and defensive capabilities (Sokov, 1997: 111). Throughout the 1990s, there emerged a second paradigm that contested the inextricable link between offensive and defensive strategic weapons and the viability of mutually assured destruction (MAD). This paradigm, branded as the 'reduced threat paradigm' by Chkanikov and Shoumikin, stressed the termination of the Cold War and the virtual disappearance of the threat of US nuclear attacks on Russia. Yakovlev, Russian Commander-in-Chief of the Strategic Missile Force, reiterated that counter-strike forces would not be necessary and that counter-value strike capabilities could provide Russia with a reasonable deterrent (Chkanikov and Shoumikhin 1998, 292).

Sokov argued that Russian military strategists came to regard strategic nuclear weapons as unusable, while military doctrines opened up to the idea of using tactical short-range nuclear weapons for warfighting scenarios (Sokov, 2011). Moscow's post-Cold War nuclear doctrines sought to readjust Russian policies toward regional war scenarios, whereas the notion of large-scale nuclear exchanges was largely ignored (Trenin, 2005a: 9). Russian leadership also voiced its determination to not repeat Soviet mistakes. Moscow's previous heavy investment in nuclear weapons and defences were interpreted as having accelerated the economic collapse of the Soviet Union (Giles and Monaghan, 2014: 6–7). In more general terms, Giles stressed that the recent military reforms marked the final demise of the Soviet military from the 'cadre unit and mass mobilisation structure' toward a smaller, more deployable, and more effective force for contemporary conflict scenarios (Giles, 2014: 147; see also Renz & Thornton, 2012).

Although the central focus of the thesis is based on international missile defence diplomacy and does not primarily focus on domestic factors in Russian BMD policies (for an in-depth analysis of domestic drivers in Russian BMD policies see Tsypkin & Loukianova, 2009; Tsypkin 2009, 2011, 2012), it is worth mentioning some particularities of the nature of Russia's leadership as well as Russian post-Cold War civil-military relations, as both influenced the missile defence debate in Moscow. Throughout the 1990s, the role of the Russian military in domestic politics and foreign policy formulation influenced domestic party politics through the parliamentary elections in which former military officials participated and foreign policy formulations. Despite the prerogative of the Russian president with regard to foreign and defence policies, Sakwa showed that civilian control over the Russian military throughout the First Chechen War in the mid-1990s was at best partial (Sakwa, 2002: 409). At the same time, the Russian military was an important factor in shaping Russia's domestic and foreign policy formulations despite (or arguably because of) its decline (Umbach, 1996). As Umbach argued:

The question of a deep military reform (in contrast to a reform of just the armed forces), in order to create a stable relationship between the armed forces and a democratic state and society, is nowadays more urgent than at any time before. While the armed forces are disintegrating and collapsing from [the] inside, they increasingly alienate themselves from the society and the state it serves. In this light, the Russian military moves on a dangerous way becoming a 'state within a state'. (Umbach, 1996)

Nonetheless, as the first case study will show, the 1990s were also characterised by major disputes within the military itself, which undermines the argument of a military front against the presidential leadership (Taylor, 2009).

At the same time, Petrov maintained that a small elite with a force-structure background ('siloviki') turned Russia into a more authoritarian policy direction (Petrov, 2002). Kryshtanovskaya and White argued that the increase in official personnel with security backgrounds was mainly based on the presidential change from Yeltsin to Putin (other authors see more similarities than changes from Yeltsin to Putin) (Kryshtanovskaya & White, 2003). For the authors, Putin's appointment of figures with a security background spurred Russia's development into a 'militocracy'. Sakwa argued that political appointments were highly personalised and centred on the president constructing 'tactical combinations to maintain a balance pivoted on himself' rather than on the desire by the Yeltsin and Putin administrations to form a military-security state (Sakwa 2002, p. 458). Gomart found more heterogeneity between the Yeltsin and Putin administrations and argued that 'the [siloviki] group is probably less an active clan than a media construct' (Gomart, 2008: 42). Likewise, Renz undermined the generally admitted centrality of the siloviki within the Russian government. She argues that if there was a rise of the so-called siloviki, it was one of the consequences of a super-presidential system of appointment that is primarily based on personal loyalty, and that does not result in the control of the military structure over the political sphere. Siloviki therefore remained a 'non-homogeneous group' (Renz, 2010). Smith argues that the executive branch of power, which overshadowed the legislature, political parties, and public opinion, dominated the implementation and formation of security policy. He also pictured the Russian political system as a "hyper-presidential" one, where checks on the executive power are lacking (Smith, 2010).

The role of the Russian military in under Putin and Medvedev has been equally subject to controversial debates. Blank argued that the inflated threat assessments led to 'pro-military outcomes. Blank argued that this was a direct result of the enduring failure to establish

democratic controls over the armed forces (Blank, 2011: 2-3). Another critic of Russia's domestic setting, Felgenhauer, highlighted that the General Staff is 'more or less independent of outside political constraints' just like in Soviet times, and that it is the Russian military leadership that eventually determines the threats to Russian security (Felgenhauer, 2005). Gomart likewise highlighted that Russian civil-military relations should not be understood in terms of 'Western' models of civilian control but traditional patterns in which threats to Russian internal and external security are instrumentalised by the state to justify the size and political influence of military and security bodies (Gomart, 2008). With regard to the policy outlook of Russia's military leadership, Stewart and Zhukov argued that 'Russia's military leaders appear as hawkish as they had been during Soviet days, while political elites remained deferential and relatively reluctant to become involved in a meaningful debate over national security policy', even though the highlighted Russian military was more hesitant to use force in Georgia in 2008 than their political counterparts (Stewart & Zhukov, 2009: 337). Whereas the overall balance between civilian and military leadership tilted toward the Russian president from the early 2000s on (Sakwa, 2002: 411), lingering disputes over the civilianisation of military affairs remained part of ongoing domestic considerations and disputes (Herspring, 2009: 265, 273-276). As such, the political views of servicemen remained an important factor in electoral Russian politics over the post-Cold War years (Sakwa, 2002: 411).

Throughout the first two terms of the Putin presidency, the Russian president built a system that concentrated decisions in a more centralised way. In Gomart's view, Putin managed to achieve dominance and control over the security community, but in a political system that lacked transparency and in which informal networks and practices predominated (Gomart, 2008). According to Tsyarkin and Loukianova, the centralisation of foreign policymaking also accounted for the formulation of nuclear policies, even though the president himself remained dependent on information by governmental agencies such as the Ministry of Defence (Tsyarkin & Loukianova, 2009: 112). At the same time, the authors argued that Russia's domestic decision-making shifted from a well-established interagency process for nuclear and arms control issues toward a system based on the personal preferences of the leadership and their relationship with heads of government agencies. Gomart described the setting as highly informal with shifting groups of civil-military-security officials pushing for influence and personal gain (Gomart, 2008).

Whereas the Russian Security Council remained officially in charge of passing important decisions on military policies, its post-Cold War importance in fact depended on the president's relationship with the Council's secretary. In addition, whereas Russian generals are members of

the Security Council alongside former KGB-officers, Tsypkin and Loukianova questioned their decision-making power in nuclear security issues (Tsypkin & Loukianova, 2009: 114 - 117). Nonetheless, the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the General Staff has been cited as a main source of information for the president in the field of missile defence and as being consistently anti-‘Western’ in its outlook (Tsypkin, 2009: 788; Tsypkin & Loukianova, 2009: 116). The Ministry of Defence’s Main Directorate for International Cooperation became more central in informing the Minister of Defence on nuclear issues, whose influence, in turn, has been subject to the personal preferences of the Russian leadership. The Duma and the Federation Council played a major role in obstructing the formulation of Yeltsin’s nuclear and missile defence agenda, but their importance decreased since the inauguration of Putin. In addition, the Russian defence industry, which came under increased sanctions by the US throughout the 1990s and 2000s, promoted a strongly anti-‘Western’ view in Russia’s security debates. At the same time, Lilly questioned the influence of the defence industry in contributing to the formulation of Russian defence and foreign policies. Lilly argued that the Military Industrial Commission that was formed in 2006 shifted the responsibilities of military procurement policies, including missile defence, from the General Staff to the government’s cabinet, even though the possession of specialised knowledge might have contributed to the continuation of the importance of the General Staff in formulating BMD policies (Lilly, 2014: 21)

The increasing centrality of the Russian president in formulating missile defence and nuclear policies throughout the 2000s does not mean that either Putin or Medvedev were not confronted by preferences of other figures. In fact, pressure from the Russian military—in particular in light of the controversial military reforms from 2008 on—increased the willingness of the Putin and Medvedev administrations to win back military elites (Lilly, 2014: 288). At the same time, individuals such as Deputy Prime Minister Chemezov; former Russian ambassador to NATO, Rogozin; and the head of the Kremlin’s staff, Sergey Ivanov, opposed parts of the military reforms and might have influenced Russia’s BMD policy formulations (Lilly, 2014: 288). Tsypkin argued that Putin himself was not only put under pressure by conservative forces, but also by liberal elites such as Boris Nemtsov to address missile defence issues in an anti-‘Western’ way to not endanger his standing in Russia’s domestic political setting (Tsypkin, 2009: 785 – 786). At the same time, opinions on the desirability of progressive nuclear disarmament have been subject to the domestic preferences of particular interest groups and fluctuated among ministries and individuals (Tsypkin & Loukianova, 2009: 117).

US nuclear thinking and Ballistic Missile Defence traditions

In the past decades, two key features informed US nuclear and missile defence policies. First, the formulation of missile defence policies was heavily dependent on domestic developments and technological prerogatives. As such, the formulation of foreign policies on missile defences had to be consistently balanced with internal considerations. Second, a significant number of US analysts and policymakers never accepted the strategic stability paradigm of the 1970s. In fact, throughout the Cold War, strategic stability and missile defence developed into a key partisan issue between doves and nuclear hawks (FitzGerald, 2000).

A key feature of US missile defence policies has been the importance of domestic variables in defining foreign policy outcomes. As Peoples showed, missile defence policies resembled broader US considerations in terms of solving security-related challenges through America's home-grown technological prowess. According to Peoples, the 'instrumental conception' of American ideology with regard to technology been a key feature on persistent attempt to build a missile defence shield (Peoples, 2010). Moreover, the centrality of US weapons industries in the past decades promoted US missile defence policies (Kubbig, 1990). Westwick argued that the Strategic Defence Initiative was 'an explicit expression of US technological hegemony' based on America's weapons industry (Westwick, 2010: 341). In addition, according to FitzGerald, Reagan's 'Star Wars' programme had a strong domestic component, as it aimed to gain the moral high ground over the critical nuclear freeze movement that threatened to undermine the domestic credibility of the Reagan administration (FitzGerald, 2000).

Missile defence policies have been subject to two different approaches to nuclear arms control: that coming from nuclear doves and that coming from nuclear hawks, which mostly—though not entirely—have been formed along party political lines (Futter, 2011; Holdren & Rotblatt, 1987: 4). In the first Reagan administration, the antagonism between a faction that rejected arms control approaches with the Soviet Union based on the premise that Washington could 'outspend' Moscow clashed with more conciliatory forces that aimed at establishing an element of stability with the Soviet Union (FitzGerald, 2000: 114–147). In the US, powerful interest groups continued to lobby for a nuclear and missile defence posture that would have the potential to bring about a return to the golden age of American nuclear superiority of the 1950s (McDonough, 2006a: 12). As such, US policymakers and strategists remained the greatest challengers to the mutually assured destruction paradigm that the US had helped to bring about (McDonough, 2006c). While nuclear primacy over the Soviet Union received the focus of

nuclear hawks throughout the Cold War period, 'rogue states' became the primary concern for US strategists in the post-Cold War era (Kagan & Schmitt, 1998).

Chapter 3

US-Russian Ballistic Missile Defence Diplomacy, 1999-2002

This chapter addresses the impact of US BMD on the broader US-Russian relationship between 1999 and 2002. It argues that the transition away from the Cold War 'Pax Atomica' towards the abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty occurred with little friction and that missile defence had a marginal impact on the overall relationship. In fact, as Bohlen argued, Cold War strategic arms control did not die with a 'bang, but a whimper.' (Bohlen 2003: 8)

Multiple factors have contributed to this outcome. The fact that Russia was recovering from a decade of economic and military decline together with the ability of the Putin administration to implement a strategic foreign policy that sought closer ties with the United States eventually relegated ballistic missile defence and nuclear arms control-related issues to second tier status. Second, after the inauguration of George W. Bush, international and, more importantly, domestic misgivings about US policies contributed to an overall more benign US approach towards Moscow. The fact that continued friction over nuclear arms control did not lead to increased hostility in the broader relationship reflected the shift from a Cold War military-security related focus on bilateral arms control to a political-order based approach in which details of weapons systems played a less significant role. The broader relationship – Russia's role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and relationships with regional powers deemed to be adversarial to the US – remained largely untouched.

The negative effects of US ballistic missile defence policy were secondary to the general direction of the relationship, but nevertheless caused continuous unease. In Russia, US missile defence policies undermined the resolve of pro-'Western' political groupings that found it hard to justify Washington's policy. Moreover, missile defence was employed as a recurring issue to undermine the authority of the Yeltsin administration. In the US, proponents of long-range ballistic missile defence employed rhetoric that depicted Russia as being keen on global missile and Weapons of Mass Destruction-related technology proliferation, thereby justifying US BMD deployment. The result of this strategy was a heightened sense of fear regarding Russia's ties with US adversaries, thereby contributing to a more antagonistic stance towards Russia. In addition, whereas the differences in military and political power induced Russia into a more cooperative stance on missile defence and nuclear disarmament, Moscow's consent was based

on great future expectations regarding Washington's willingness to grant Russia enhanced international status. It is not difficult to detect the emergence of Russia's 'US exploitation narrative' that has dominated Moscow's policies over the past decade. Moreover, throughout the early 2000s, attempts to push through the preferred security agenda at times resembled Cold War-like approaches to undermining the agenda of the other side by means of 'winning over Europe' along with non-transparent diplomatic manoeuvres that were prone to be negatively interpreted by the other side.

To provide a solid background of diplomacy on ballistic missile defence, the first part of this chapter will look at the chronology of events in the missile defence sphere, broader US-Russian relations as well as US and Russian nuclear policies. The following section will seek to identify the reasoning behind Washington and Moscow's diplomatic activities in the area of missile defence. Whilst arguing that missile defence did not destabilise US-Russian relations per se, the chapter concludes by stressing that potential future friction would likely go on to disrupt US-Russian relations despite the ratification of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) in 2002.

Chronology of events

Whereas US-Russian disputes on missile defence were solely based on demarcation agreements regarding the systems that could be developed under the ABM Treaty, the US Missile Defense Act of 1999 represented a fundamentally new stage in US-Russian BMD diplomacy as it explicitly aimed at building long-range territorial defences 'as soon as technologically possible.' (US Congress, 1999) Russian officials reacted to the ratification of the US National Missile Defence Act in July 1999 with fierce criticism. Russia threatened to abolish various nuclear and conventional arms control regimes should the US abrogate the ABMT (Whitehouse, 1999).

However, despite the serious deterioration in US-Russian relations after NATO's Kosovo intervention and significant domestic pressure on both sides, missile defence did not prevent the US and Russia from returning to a bilateral dialogue (Harz, 2008). The Clinton administration for its part reaffirmed the importance of the (potentially altered) ABM Treaty so as to guarantee 'strategic stability' (Clinton and Yeltsin, 1999). Both parties also reiterated their desire to exchange data on missile launches and on early warning in a joint centre to further promote 'the strengthening of strategic stability.' (Clinton and Yeltsin, 1999) US Defence Secretary Cohen's trip to Moscow in mid-September 1999 was intended to strengthen bilateral understanding in

reviving broader cooperation, including consultations covering the implementation of early-warning centres to detect missile launches (Johnson, 1999). Moreover, Cohen also started to make overtures regarding the completion of a Russian early-warning radar system near Irkutsk should Russia agree to alter the ABMT (Mann, 1999).

Much of the subsequent approaches to nuclear matters were based on president Yeltsin's willingness to move beyond missile defence obstacles at the G8 Summit in Cologne in mid-1999. Yeltsin emphasised that he would 'consider possible changes in the strategic situation that gave a bearing on the ABM Treaty and, as appropriate, possible proposals for further increasing the viability of this Treaty.' (Mann, 1999) Yeltsin's decision was significant as Moscow's stance shifted from a more principled reluctance to give in to US demands to an endorsement of long-range US ballistic missile defences as long as it would remain within the confines of an internationally binding treaty. 'For the first time', Clinton's National Security Advisor, Samuel Berger, noted, 'the Russians have agreed to discuss changes in the ABM Treaty that may be necessitated by a national missile defense system were we to decide to deploy them.' (Clinton & Yeltsin, 1999)

Russian negotiators proved to be much less positive towards US eagerness to change the ABMT than Yeltsin himself. In fact, as national security advisor Strobe Talbott highlights, 'throughout the fall of 1999, the Russian military was more assertive and confident in stonewalling us on NMD than it had been over NATO enlargement and Balkan peacekeeping.' (Talbott, 2003: 384) Moreover, the US also fell short in trying to seek Russian consensus on ABM Treaty changes.

After the inauguration of Putin in January 2000, the US sought to convince Russia to accept ABM Treaty changes. In January, the US also dispatched a list of 'talking points' to Russia in which Washington proposed some changes to the ABM Treaty in return for the continuation of bilateral non-proliferation efforts. According to the US document, the biggest caveat from the Russian perspective was the premise that the US and Russia would engage in yet another renegotiation in March 2001 so that Washington could deploy 'more effective defences'. Moreover, the document encouraged Russia to develop countermeasures in the future should the US shield prove too much of a security obstacle for Russia ('U.S. Drafts Protocol to the ABM Treaty and Associated "Talking Points"', 2000). To the disdain of arms control advocates, the Clinton administration actively encouraged Russia to preserve its second-strike capability against the US and to continue with its current high-alert levels (Rothstein, 2000). The document

pledged that the US would give Russia sufficient planning time to adjust its nuclear arsenal to future threats from US ground-based mid-range interceptors. It also proposed a more ambitious nuclear disarmament regime beyond START III levels if Russia were to feel threatened by US NMD developments.

However, the Putin administration conditioned the eventual ratification of START II on US adherence to the ABMT, including the 1997 Helsinki demarcation agreement that was designed to prohibit long-range missile defence deployments (Putin, 2000). In a speech before the Duma the Russian president reiterated that Russia would react assertively to a potential US ABM Treaty abrogation:

We [...] will pull out not only from START II but also from the entire system of treaty-based relations on the limitation and control of strategic and conventional armaments [...] We can also raise the issue of reviewing our decisions on tactical weapons (Putin, 2000).

In the second half of 2000, the US and Russian president did not come to an agreement on changes regarding the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The US Senate remained reluctant to agree to the additional 1997 theatre missile defence demarcation agreements that were necessary to complete Russia's START II ratification, whilst Russia had no desire to change the ABM Treaty. At the same time, Putin embarked on a bilateral and multilateral campaign that stressed the desire to maintain nuclear stability and to avoid changes in the ABM Treaty. This approach included the signing of a Russian-Sino joint statement on the necessity to prevent the deployment of long-range missile defences (Tyler, 2001a), various talks with European and Canadian leaders on strategic stability ('Putin looks to Canada for NMD support', 2000), UN resolutions supporting the preservation of the ABM Treaty (United Nations, 2000) as well as efforts to enhance multilateral arms control regimes (Johnson, 2000). Diplomatic efforts also included Russian visits to North Korea. In addition, Putin proposed an alternative to the planned US National Missile Defence System by proposing a non-strategic joint missile defence effort that would be based on multilateral cooperation between Russia, Europe and the US (Tyler, 2001). At the same time, both sides accelerated the search for future multilateral trajectories to curb WMD proliferation and to intensify missile defence cooperation (Clinton & Putin 2000).

According to Sestanovich, missile defence cooperation pledges between the US and Russia contributed to a 'vigorous resurgence' in US-Russian relations in the late 1990s and early 2000s despite the broader political fallout over NATO enlargement and NATO's Kosovo intervention

(Sestanovich, 2006: 23). In fact, for Russian Defence Minister Ivanov, missile defence cooperation held great promise for institutionalising the bilateral relationship (Ivanov, 2000: 20). At the Cologne Summit in June 1999, the agreement on the resumption of earlier joint US-Russian theatre missile defence exercises was perceived as putting the US-Russian relationship on a more institutionalised footing. At the Clinton-Putin Summit in June 2000, a detailed cooperation plan on a joint early-warning system was the major accomplishment of the meeting. The February 2001, resumption of US-Russian theatre missile defence exercises did much to normalise US-Russian relations and increased the prospects for an accelerated process of NATO-Russian dialogue (Krause, 2002). Moreover, when the US and Russia concluded the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) in May 2002, missile defence cooperation plans called for on-going bilateral meetings and military cooperation.

Despite allegations that the US would quickly move towards the abolition of the ABM Treaty, the Bush administration was initially more cautious about abrogating the ABM Treaty after its initiation in 2001. In fact, George W. Bush's approaches prior to his May 2001 speech on the future of US nuclear strategy and the ABM Treaty constituted one of the first genuine attempts by the newly elected US administration to encourage US-Russian relations and signalled a willingness to reach a mutual compromise with Russia (Shoumikhin, 2002: 318). George W. Bush also supported further nuclear cuts that would favour Russia's alleged strategic interests (Bush 2000).⁸

At the same time, whilst Russia continued to fiercely oppose US BMD policies by highlighting that the US plans would represent a disturbance in the balance of power and increase the potential use of offensive weapons such as MIRVs, could trigger an arms race in space, and would prevent nuclear powers from restraining an arms race by third parties, Russia's support of a strict interpretation of the ABM Treaty declined (Genoa Summit Meeting, 2001). According to Pifer, in an autumn 2001 meeting, Russian officials asked what changes the US wanted to the 1972 ABM Treaty in order to permit the US missile defence program to go forward. The Russian officials seemed open to the idea of possibly altering the Treaty, but US officials provided no specifics (Pifer 2014, pers. comm.).

Whereas Russia had previously threatened to counter the abrogation of the ABM Treaty with a renewed arms race, Moscow reacted calmly to US moves after '9/11' and supported the

⁸ In contrast to the Clinton administration, the Bush administration favoured unilateral nuclear cuts outside international disarmament and arms control regimes.

continuation of strategic discussions to develop a new, yet to be defined strategic framework. Despite the importance of arms control in Russia's foreign policy activities, Putin eventually accepted the potential failure to curb US BMD plans: 'If relations between Russia and the West, Russia and NATO, Russia and the US continue to develop in the spirit of partnership and even of alliance, then no harm will be done.' (Putin 2001a)

US-Russian Relations, 1999 – 2002

Whilst it would go beyond the scope of this thesis to account for the intricate details of broader US-Russian relations within the period of this case study, this section extracts the pivotal factors and developments in US-Russian relations as well as American and Russian foreign policy deliberations between 1999 and 2002. This analysis will form the backdrop for the subsequent attempt to interpret Russian and US missile defence policies.

US-Russian relations in the 1990s and early 2000s centred around one short-term and two long-term factors. The major short-term factor that affected US-Russian relations through the end of the 1990s was NATO's intervention in Serbia. For Russia, NATO's Kosovo intervention came as a shock and was deeply resented by the large majority of Russian policymakers and political actors (Granville, 2000). For the US, in contrast, the Kosovo intervention epitomised both an assertion of US commitment to Europe as well as an expansion of America's global role as the 'indispensable nation'. The conflict over Kosovo was linked to increasingly diametrical interpretations of the usefulness of the United Nations and the definition of state sovereignty (Lieven, 2002).

At the same time, as part of a long-term divergence between the foreign policy outlook of Russia and the US, both sides had developed fundamentally different interpretations of the end of the Cold War which fed into differing expectations regarding the policies of the other side (Light, 2010: 229; Monaghan, 2008: 730). In the minds of Russian policymakers, Moscow had voluntarily ceded Cold War ideological antagonisms (Chernyaev, 2012). For the majority of US foreign policy officials, Moscow had 'lost' the Cold War and would therefore be willing to eventually integrate into the US-led global order (Richard Sakwa, 2008: 260). On the other hand, whilst Russian President Yeltsin sought to foster a free market democracy along the lines of US emphasis on global economic free trade regimes, according to Stent, there was little willingness to renounce Russia's great power status and to subjugate Russian interest to US security priorities (Stent, 2005: 265).

A second long-term development that affected US-Russian relations throughout the late 1990s was the deepening of a geostrategic competition surrounding former Warsaw Pact and post-Soviet states. In the perception of Russian foreign policymakers, NATO expansion threatened to isolate Moscow from the European security space (Cohen, 1993). For the US, NATO enlargement ultimately guaranteed pacification of Central Europe, promised to expand the zone of democratic governments with strong ties to the US, and offered a hedge against potential future Russian aggression (Asmus et al., 1993).

This, however, did not mean that US-Russian relations were devoid of cooperation. Economically, the US and Russia agreed on integrating Moscow into the Western-led institutional framework of global governance. In the nuclear field, both the US and Russia were in agreement on the desirability of downsizing the Cold War nuclear weapons stockpiles. Both cooperated on the global non-proliferation agenda of weapons of mass destruction (Mutimer 2000). Despite the presidential shift from Clinton to George W. Bush, cooperative efforts remained essentially untouched. After September 2001 the US and Russia voiced their support for cooperating in a global agenda against terrorism (Trenin, 2005b). As a result of this rapprochement, Angela Stent argued that the year 2002 marked the 'high point' in US-Russian relations after the Cold War (Stent, 2014: 74).

US Policy on Russia

As argued in the previous chapter, broader domestic foreign policy formulations as well as an increasing unilateralist outlook among Washington's officials and pundits essentially shaped Washington's BMD policies throughout the 1990s. As a result of Clinton's strategy to incorporate Republican ideas about US foreign policy resolve and strategic considerations among Clinton's security advisors and ministers, a consensus that embraced US leadership on a global scale and an ambitious military reform agenda emerged (Conry, 1997).

In contrast to Russia, which continued to see the US as its central point of reference in the post-Cold War era, Washington's foreign policy became much less focused on one single overriding threat. Jervis remarked that 'the absence of an overriding threat has magnified [the] difficulty [with focusing on the overriding threat to the US] and rendered commitments that span administrations increasingly problematic.' (Jervis, 2001: 148) Clinton's initial 'Russia First' policy

was broadly based on the assumption that economic assistance through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and neoliberal market reforms would lead to a democratization of Russia (Stent, 2005; Colton and McFaul, 2001). However, the Clinton administration's approach ran into difficulties. This was most clearly expressed in liberal economic policies that favoured a small Russian oligarchic elite, whilst Washington's economic recommendations were at time ill suited and painful for the Russian population (Simes, 2007).

The increasingly unilateral outlook of US foreign policy meant the Russian concerns about European security architecture were relegated to a second-order issue. The 1999 Kosovo intervention epitomised both the assertion of US commitment to Europe as well as the expansion of America's global role as the 'indispensable nation'. (Kupchan, 2000) Moreover, whereas Russia was predominantly considered to be a declining power that had failed to manage domestic challenges, Moscow continued to be regarded as a potential long-term challenger to US policies in Europe. As Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Walter Slocombe put it, 'an integral part of our pragmatic partnership policy for Russia is that we continue to remain strong, so that we may have a military hedge against whatever might come.' (Cited in Yost, 1999: 126) Part of the continuing scepticism about Russia's long-term development stemmed from a domestic environment that was based on deeply seated antagonism towards the former Cold War adversary (Lieven, 2012: 162).

Whilst chapter six will elaborate more closely on the Bush administration's policy, it is important to note that the initial months of the Bush administration's strategy attempted to base the US-Russian relationship on a more 'sober' and 'realpolitik' footing than was apparently the case under the Clinton administration (Rice, 2000). This approach implied that Washington would decrease the potential centrality of Russia in US foreign policymaking by downgrading its status in various ministries. Bush also rebuffed an early presidential meeting with Putin (Dietrich, 2005: 189). However, this approach did not preclude the Bush administration from pursuing areas of mutual interests in economic and anti-terrorist policies. In fact, the attacks on the US in September 2001 deepened US-Russian cooperation. The signing of SORT reversed the initial unilateral intentions of the Bush administration (Bush in Dietrich, 2005: 192). The Bush administration also increased its rhetorical support for Russia's bid to join the WTO and to reduce tariffs on Russian exports to the US (Dietrich, 2005: 191). Similar to the Clinton administration, however, the Bush administration remained firm in its commitment to expand NATO and the rejection of any Russian veto power on the enlargement process (Bush, 2001).

The post-Cold War context and Washington's focus on 'rogue states' devalued the need for robust nuclear arsenals in the eyes of most US strategists and policymakers (Delpech, 2001: 8). Yet, despite significant cuts in nuclear weapons, the US essentially preserved its Cold War nuclear deterrence outlook towards Russia (O'Hanlon, 1995: 107). At its core, the conservative US nuclear policy throughout the 1990s was based on parochial interests of the military as well as conservative strategists who maintained much of the strategic outlook from the Cold War (Quester and Utgoff, 1993). *Essentials of Post-Cold war Deterrence*, a document commissioned by the United States Strategic Command (Stratcom, 1995), called for an extension of deterrence beyond bilateral relations with Russia through parallel deterrence strategies tailored to countries and their leaders. In light of the expanded aims to deter Russia, China and various 'rogues', the panel recommended to not go below the levels set by START II (Stratcom, 1995). What emerged was a reduced Cold War posture that continued to rely on a maximum deterrent posture (Payne 2001: 1; Bohlen 2003: 55). According to Müller and Sohnius, Washington's quest for being the 'indispensable nation' was to be preserved by a military 'full spectrum dominance' that included nuclear weapons (Müller and Sohnius, 2006: 10).

The Bush administration's nuclear policy approach, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, sought to reverse some of the Clinton administration's ideas. First and foremost, whereas Clinton favoured nuclear stability with Russia, the Bush administration sought to free its hands from Cold War arms control approaches. At the end of the 1990s, presidential candidate George W. Bush outlined that the US was moving towards technologically dominating the future of warfare in order to sustain an American-centred international order (Bush 1999). Likewise, whereas the Clinton administration had supported a limited long-range BMD system that would preserve (but alter) the ABM Treaty, the Bush administration regarded the 1972 Treaty as a barrier to a more robust global BMD system. The general predisposition to 'freeing' the United States from international legal commitments primarily followed the ideological bent of multiple officials in the Bush administration who regarded Cold War-type bilateral commitments as an 'unnecessary encumbrance' and assumed that China and Russia would 'chose to bandwagon when faced with unquestionable supremacy', as Walker argued (Walker, 2007: 445).

However, throughout 2001, the Democratic congressional opposition limited the White House's manoeuvrability on abrogating the ABMT (Isaacs, 2001: 21). Whilst some stated that a scrapping of the ABM Treaty might spark an arms race with Russia and China, Democratic policymakers rejected a unilateral withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, arguing that this might enhance Russia's willingness to sell missiles to Iran and North Korea. Fears were also voiced with regard to Russia's potential suspension of the Nunn-Lugar agreement, which was set up in order to coordinate the nuclear disarmament process in Russia (O' Hanlon, 2001). Only the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in September 2001 decisively changed the domestic dynamics of BMD policies by muting Democratic opposition to US BMD plans (Futter, 2011: 165). Within the US administration, '9/11' helped to decrease the influence of Secretary of State Colin Powell's more cautious stance on BMD and increased the power of long-standing long-range missile defence advocates such as Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz (Kubbig, 2004).

Russian Foreign Policy

Whereas the overall foreign policy of the United States in the late 1990s and early 2000s was based on expansive aims, Russia's overall foreign policy outlook was defensive and heavily based on the domestic and economic issues. Whereas Russia's foreign policy initially aimed at pursuing liberal 'pro-Westernism' in which Russia strived for radical neoliberal reforms and a related partnership with the West, from the mid-1990s on the foreign policy outlook was increasingly defined by growing resentment towards the US.

Whereas various foreign policy strategies throughout the 1990s remained in flux (Light, 2010), Russia began to focus on the establishment of a diplomatic and security hegemony in the former states of the Soviet Union and the preservation of Russia's great power status (Lynch, 2001; also: Kerr, 1995). Lukyanov stressed that the 'guideline' that drove Russian foreign policy after a short period of pro-Western sentiments has been based on the 'desire to restore the status of a great power [*velikaya derzhava*] capable of conducting an independent policy'. (Lukyanov, 2009: 129)

At the same time, from 2000 onwards, Putin sought to reverse some ideas of the 'Primakovian' years in which Russia's foreign minister sought to balance the US and get former states of the Soviet Union under a tighter grip. According to MacFarlane, in his first months in office, Putin favoured a benign approach towards the US in order to improve the prospects for a struggling Russian economy (Macfarlane, 2006: 47–49). The broader foreign policy outlook remained

defensive, emphasising the protection of Russia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as the 'prevention of military aggression against Russia'. (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000) At the same time, as Granville argued, the Kosovo intervention together with NATO's enlargement and the 'Western' bombing campaigns in Iraq had undermined the intentions of pro-Western forces in Russia that had become a minor faction in the domestic security debates in Moscow (Granville, 2000).

Despite the widespread resentment towards US foreign policies, the Putin administration remained careful to not antagonise the US. Tsygankov described Putin's approach towards the US as 'great power pragmatism' that first and foremost focused on the primacy of *innenpolitik*, in particular economics (Tsygankov, 2010: 139). The *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation* stated in 2000 that 'political, economic, and social stability' would be at the core of Russia's interests (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000). Nichols thus characterised Putin's policies towards the US as a 'bandwagoning approach' that was based on the realisation that Russia needed cooperation for its internal recovery (Nichols, 2002). As such, the previous quest for 'absolute power equality' with the US was subjugated to other needs (Tsygankov, 2010: 97). Russian policymakers came to see the emphasis on a status quo-like policy that would stress the importance of international law and territorial integrity, multipolarity and international cooperation (instead of Russian isolationism) as the best means to assuring Russia's global influence and its domestic recovery (Light, 2003: 45–49).

At the same time, the US intervention in Yugoslavia negatively affected Russia's overall view on US-Russian relations. Mankoff highlighted that NATO's Kosovo intervention had three major impacts on Russian foreign policy thinking. First, Moscow reasoned that international politics would continue to be based on power politics. Second, Moscow interpreted the intervention as proof of the non-existence of European security architecture despite the NATO-Russian Founding Act of 1997. Third, Russia's foreign policy elite came to more forcefully argue that Russia needed to pursue its own interests regardless of the needs of European and American partners (Mankoff, 2012b: 98).

For the majority of Russian foreign policy makers and experts, the 1990s seemed to be aimed at continual humiliation as was expressed in US tariffs on steel, the "chicken war" over agricultural exports to Russia and the continued existence of the Jackson-Vanick amendment that was

designed to punish the Soviet Union's restrictive emigration policies towards Jews and other religious groups (Nichols, 2002).

Russia's Nuclear and BMD Policies

Russia's emphasis on the importance of nuclear deterrence increased throughout the 1990s, in particular after the NATO campaign in Yugoslavia in 1999. In fact, whereas the 1997 National Security Concept had found that nuclear deterrence and the absence of a threat of aggression against Russia would 'allow [for the] redistribution of the state's and society's resources for urgent settlement of pressing internal problems' (cited in Kassianova, 2001: 832), the 2000 National Security Concept stressed the centrality of nuclear weapons to Russian security (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000). For numerous policymakers, the 'nuclear order' and Russia's retaliatory capability against the US were the last of the superpower legacy that had prevailed after NATO's Kosovo intervention (Mankoff, 2009: 95).

Whilst Moscow sought to maintain nuclear parity with the US, Moscow's economic decline threatened to slowly undermine the quantitative nuclear parity with Washington (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.). Combined with domestic opposition to the Russian president, this factor contributed to a linkage between START II and outstanding missile defence issues (Lepingwell, 1995: 87). In a climate of open hostility towards Yeltsin, a 1995 Duma report recommended a modification of the START II provisions to allow for the MIRVing of ICBMs despite the START II provisions that sought to eliminate MIRVed missiles. Moreover, the report issued that START II ratification should depend upon a successful conclusion of US-Russian missile defence demarcation talks. In June 1995, Foreign Minister Kozyrev maintained that 'naturally we shall be able to set about ratifying the treaty only if there is strict compliance with the USA on the demarcation between tactical and strategic systems.' (Kozyrev cited in Lepingwell, 1995: 87) A revised version on the legalities of START II prepared by the Duma called, among other things, for the right to withdraw from START II should the US violate its commitments under the Helsinki demarcation agreement on tactical and strategic defences (Shoumikhin, 2011: 113).

Parliamentary opposition to the ratification of the START II Treaty rested on the premise that the destruction of MIRVed missiles under the treaty would give the US a strategic advantage (Sokov, 1998). Whilst conservative military officers branded START II as 'American control over Russian security' (Allison et al., 1996: 245), the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained committed to START II and saw the treaty as a guarantee for a

strategic balance with the US in times of Russian economic decline (Lo, 2003: 18). Other commentators have suggested that the weakness of Russia's conventional forces was the main driver behind the evolution of Russia's nuclear doctrine throughout the 1990s (de Haas, 2001: 12). Nevertheless, the actual structure of Russia's forces remained internally disputed as various proponents for stronger conventional forces aimed at abolishing 'nuclear parity' with the US (Trenin, 2005a: 19). In the mind of proponents of military reforms, this would also have allowed for the preservation of a great power security status. However, Putnam and Golts have argued that military reformists unsuccessfully pushed for a sweeping reform away from an army that would engage in large-scale conventional wars towards a more mobile professional army that would be more useful in conflicts such as Chechnya. Therefore, Russian doctrines eventually continued their emphasis on nuclear deterrence and a first-use policy in the early stages of a conflict (Golts and Putnam, 2004: 127). However, how precisely the Russian nuclear forces should be structured in the post-Cold War environment remained subject to intra-military as well as intra-policymaking disputes.

While Lieutenant General Volkov proposed a reliance on road-mobile and silo-based Topol-M (SS-25) ICBMs in early 1994, the military strongly opposed such overreliance on land-based systems and favoured a stronger emphasis on sea-based deterrence. Colonel Belov, to name one example, maintained that a sole focus on land-based systems would spur the developments of US missile defences to intercept ICBMs. Instead, he proposed to ignore the START II treaty to push for a less expensive option that would focus on silo-based MIRVed missiles and SSBNs (Lepingwell, 1995: 73, 74). Yury Masluyukov, First Deputy Prime Minister and fervent supporter of the ratification of START II on economic and military grounds, maintained that START II provides for productions short of MRVs, which could be easily deployed on Topol-Ms. Thus, should the US withdraw from the ABM Treaty, Russia would be able to withdraw from the START agreements whereupon 'the Topol-M missile group – which is an order of magnitude more effective than our SS-18s – will be capable of defeating space-based missile defences and equally able to counter a ground-based missile-defense system' (Maslyukov, 1999).

Various Russia commentators and officials maintained that the US was actually hiding the true potential of NMD against 'rogues', and alleged their misapprehension of the gap between US intelligence (that did not single out short-term or medium-term threats to the US) and US policies that seemed to rush towards a build-up of US BMD. Neither did they buy in to allegations of the great divisions in US domestic missile defence policies. Rather, the US would

set up a 'smoke screen' of executive-legislative disagreement over the NMD agenda to purposefully confuse Moscow and to temporarily lull its fears (Chkanikov and Shoumikhin 1998, 293).

Others maintained that the potential future deployment of NMD and the implementation of START II could make it impossible to re-establish the group of heavy Russian SS-18 ICBMs. Moreover, concerns also arose from the US '3 plus 3 formula that avoided to single out dates for any possible future expansion of the system. This, in turn,' fostered speculations on the nature of US BMD architectures in the future. For instance, in 1997, Russian analysts were unable to estimate whether the US would use a limited number of Minuteman III missiles for ABM purposes. At the same time, questions were raised about the potential of US radar systems and existing or future space-based early warning systems in connection with NMD. Some commentators alleged that the US could deploy Anti-Satellite capability by adding sensor capabilities to ground- and space-based systems. Others warned of developments regarding direct energy systems. Underlying these allegations was a feeling of Russia being relegated to backwardness in the field of technological innovations (Chkanikov and Shoumikhin 1998, 296–297).

At the same time, various Russian arms control experts promoted a more flexible policy towards the ABM Treaty. First and foremost, this group argued that Russia's economic situation would require it to come to terms with the US and reduce its military spending. Because the US might decide to 'thicken' its limited missile defence system in the future, Russia should seek ABM Treaty changes and a legally binding document that would prevent the US from building any BMD system that could lead to US strategic superiority towards Russia (Nazarkin & Piontkovsky, 1999). De Haas argued that the result of multiple voices and influences led to the formulation of contradictory policy preferences, highlighting a first-use nuclear policy, while rejecting the first use of military power more generally (de Haas, 2001: 12).

At the same time, nuclear policies became conflated with more general apprehension regarding US policies (Ivanov, 2000: 20). According to Kozin and Ivanov, attempts to reach domestic consensus were undermined by the 1998 US bombing of Iraq and the military intervention in Yugoslavia (Kozin, 2014, pers. comm.; Ivanov, 2014, pers. comm.). Both events strengthened hardliners in the Duma, who in turn utilised US missile defence as a reason for refusing the ratification of START II (Tsygankov, 2006: 103). Moreover, through the mid-1990s, previously

pro-‘Western’ policymakers shifted away from supporting START II, and were instead pushing for a more assertive foreign policy line. Vladimir Lukin, former Russian ambassador to the US and leading member of the reformist Yabloko Party, to name one example, maintained that Start II had to be considered in a larger strategic framework that would also include consideration of the future of the CFE Treaty and NATO expansion (Abarinov, 1995).

In addition, Russian policymakers had difficulties in comprehending US desire to break away from the constraints of bilateral arms control regimes and multilateral non-proliferation efforts (Kortunov and Shoumikhin, 1997: 159). For Russian officials, the multilateral post-Cold War non-proliferation framework had by and large continued to work throughout the 1990s. At the same time, the bilateral ‘strategic stability’ paradigm was not only a Cold War vestige carried over by the military, it was also imperative for ‘the creation of a twenty-first century democratic world order’, as Russian Defence Minister Ivanov stressed (Ivanov, 2002: 68). Russian policymakers regarded the non-proliferation regimes as a means to halt US notions of preventative warfare and multilaterally curbing WMD proliferation. Russia sought to continue a Cold War order in which the great nuclear powers would manage security challenges in different parts of the world. As Ivanov highlighted, post-Cold War challenges such as regional conflicts, aggressive separatism or interethnic strife could only be tackled if international relations, ‘first of all among the nuclear powers’, became stable and predictable (Ivanov, 2000: 16). At the same time, Russia’s nuclear deterrent was perceived as an influential tool in managing international relations together with the US. As Russian Defence Minister Ivanov stressed ‘the maintenance of strategic stability [...] requires constant attention from the world community and leadership from Russia and the United States.’ (Ivanov, 2000: 20)

The military leaders of Russia’s strategic forces regarded ‘strategic stability’ as an inclusive phenomenon, which in addition to offensive weapons, includes command, control and communication systems, early-warning systems, conventional weapons with strategic capabilities, and defensive capabilities (Sokov, 1997: 111). As such, US BMD plans affected the political, strategic and military considerations of the Russian military and the civilian leadership (Mankoff, 2012b: 100). From Moscow’s point of view, the preservation of bilateral arms control with the US was also pivotal in light of Russia’s economic and military decline. As the First Deputy Defence Minister, Andrei Kokoshin, maintained:

In conditions of economic and military weakness, arms control regimes constitute a very important element of our military security. They increase predictability of the military-

political situation ... Active participation in limiting and reducing weapons confirms Russia's status as a great power, a superpower (Kokoshin, 2000)

In fact, according to Podvig, Russia's leadership saw missile defence not as a matter of military importance, but rather as a tool in its efforts to assert its influence in international relations and achieve the status of one of the leading world powers (Podvig, 2001c). As such, Russia's fear regarding the termination of the ABM Treaty was based on unilateral US moves regarding counter-proliferation strategies. As Putin stressed:

We will bring down the level of security because somebody may get the idea that he can act with impunity, and that is a dangerous move towards wrecking the existing agreements [...] New threats arise and we must respond. But we suggest that we respond together (Putin, 2000b).

At the same time, whereas most Russian officials and commentators alleged that US BMD policies were directed against Russia (Chkanikov and Shoumikhin, 1998: 293), various Russian arms control experts promoted a more flexible policy towards the ABM Treaty (Nazarkin and Piontkovsky, 1999). Russian military experts also understood that missile defence had limited military impact and would not be able to undermine the strategic balance in the short to medium term (Podvig 2014 pers. comm.). Increasingly, Washington's proposals to go beyond a restrained focus on 'mutually assured destruction' and arms control found support among Russian policymakers (Loeb, 2001). In fact, Podvig argued that 'nothing in [...] Russian policy [suggested] that a reaction to abrogation of the ABM Treaty will be strongly negative, let alone spark a new arms race.' (Podvig 2001: 24)

Interpreting Ballistic Missile Defence Diplomacy

Russia

Based on the above developments and policy descriptions, this section seeks to interpret Russian and US activities in the field of missile defence. Throughout the 1990s, Russia's nuclear policies were defined by internal struggles between the Russian president, Russian military and diplomatic officials as well as party politics. The emerging debate over missile defence from 1994 onwards and the prospects of NATO enlargement complicated Russia's ratification of START II as both developments undermined Yeltsin's pro-Western stance domestically (Dockrill, 2005: 139). Because of the divisions between legislative and executive policymakers and among the political and military leadership, Russia's BMD policies throughout the 1990s cannot be

characterised as coherent and strategic. Instead, Moscow's conduct reflected a defensive, almost automated response to circumvent US BMD deployments, whilst eventually giving in to US demands.

Despite Putin's general intention to foster friendlier ties with the US and Europe, and to focus on Russia's domestic recovery, the presidential power shift in Russia initially led to a reversal of Yeltsin's accommodating behaviour in the field of missile defence. From the outset, Putin aimed at shifting Russia's previous defensive and reactionary stance towards a more active approach that aimed at putting Russia in the driver's seat in terms of international diplomacy related to missile defences. This change was possible because Putin was eventually able to convince the Duma of the necessity to ratify START II. It is possible that assertive domestic rhetoric on countering US missile defence plans was based on the desire to move towards further nuclear disarmament, which required the consent of the Russian legislature (Savelyev, 2008: 98). As such, Putin's aggressive rhetoric regarding potential counter measures against US missile defence deployments might have been based on the tactical desire to seek the support of the Duma for the START II ratification.

However, it is likely that the policies of the Russian president were not predominantly based on domestic considerations. By conditionally ratifying START II on the premise that Washington would ratify the 1997 demarcation agreement on BMD, the Russian president increased the pressure on the US at a time in which Moscow had almost unanimous international support on its desire to leave the ABM Treaty untouched and in place. Throughout the early 2000s, it was highly unlikely that either the US president or the US congress was willing to push for the ratification of the demarcation agreement that was based on Washington's earlier pledge to constrain the deployments of long-range missile defences. As such, the move by the Putin administration could be interpreted as an attempt to shift the blame onto the US should the ratification of START II fail. In fact, Putin himself later described his policy of the early 2000s by stressing that 'the Duma [was] against the ratification of this treaty, but after meeting with me [...] realised that our US partners would not ratify this treaty. It would not come into force (Putin, 2006).

If the Kremlin was aware of the fact that the US would not sign the treaty as alleged by the president, the Putin administration could have aimed at singling out Russia as the status-quo power of a decade-old, proven system of mutually assured destruction. Putin himself highlighted

the unilateral approach of the US, and Russia's contrasting willingness for bilateral cooperation with the US:

The difference in our approaches lies in that we propose to move ahead jointly [in preventing the ballistic missile threat] while preserving the level of trust and the balance created as the result of the 1972 ABM Treaty (Putin, 2001b)

It is possible that the diplomatic overtures were based on the same desire to picture Russia as the status quo power that would seek to constrain US unilateralism. In 2000, Russia's international efforts to circumvent changes in the ABM Treaty were numerous and included resolutions of the United Nations for the preservation of the ABMT and arms control (United Nations, 2000), bilateral pledges with non-US NATO member states ('Putin looks to Canada for NMD support', 2000) as well as attempts to replace US missile defence plans with alternative cooperative plans with Europe. As the next chapter will show, in 2000 European NATO members unanimously supported Russia. As a likely attempt to undermine US actions, through initiatives such as an international approach to seeking 'peaceful cooperation in space', the Putin administration was aiming at positioning itself as a responsible global stakeholder (Shoumikhin, 2002: 316).

In addition, the support of a broad alliance against US missile defence policies might also have derived from Putin's desire to foster an internationally stable environment for the stabilisation of Russia's domestic recovery. As argued before, a key feature of Russia's diplomacy was based on preserving the Cold War arms reduction regimes that would tie the US to mutual disarmament policies. As will be argued below, Putin initially sought to decrease Russia's reliability on nuclear deterrence as conventional modernisation efforts were regarded as more pressing. These considerations and constraints possibly contributed to Putin's attempt to revert to Gorbachevian nuclear 'sufficiency' language on nuclear disarmament. As Putin argued, for him it was pivotal to 'maintain Russia's defense capability at a level of minimum sufficiency [...] Russia must preserve its strategic potential at the level of reasonable sufficiency' (Putin, 2000c). On another occasion, Putin stressed 'the lower the level of nuclear confrontation between the main powers the better [...] We believe it is possible if we combine our efforts . . . we can assure security for all'. (Putin, 2000a) It is likely that Russia's focus on economic recovery predisposed it to overtures moving towards strategic nuclear reductions (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000). As such, Russia's initial hard line on missile defence can be interpreted as an attempt to extract US concessions in the field of nuclear warhead destructions.

In addition, Putin's emphasis on the preservation of bilateral and multilateral arms control relations could have followed a broader desire to keep the relationship with the US stable so that Moscow could focus on its economic recovery and the strengthening of its state structure after the turbulent Yeltsin years. As Putin argued:

Russia's main foreign policy goal is to create a situation [...] that will help us to solve our internal economic and political problems. And that means stability in the world, friendly relations with our neighbours and our main partners, who of course include the US (Putin, 2001d).

As argued above, the first years of the Putin administration were based on the conviction that Russian revitalisation could only proceed in a cooperative international environment. The pursuit of bilateral strategic nuclear arms control and reduction measures with the United States was prone to Putin's domestic economic agenda and sought to reduce the military threat facing Russia. At the same time, despite the at times fierce criticism of US plans to move away from the ABM Treaty, comments by the Russian president also suggests that Russia viewed the overall (nuclear) security relationship as being stable (Putin 2001c). As Putin maintained, 'let me note that the level of confidence and the level of mutual relations in [the nuclear] sphere have improved in recent years. This is very important.' (Putin, 2000b)

It is at the same time likely that the principle of nuclear parity with the US on offensive and defensive system remained pivotal for multiple foreign policy officials in Moscow (Shoumikhin, 2002: 314). As Savelyev argued, 'Russia's position on "strategic stability" [...] did not offer any room for manoeuvre and was not flexible at all.' (Savelyev, 2008: 99) As such, conceding to changes in BMD would have symbolized that Russia 'irrevocably' lost its influence on US military and foreign policy (Shoumikhin, 2002: 316) Lilly thus argued that Putin pursued a double-track diplomacy that relied on containing unilateral US ballistic missile defence deployments through linking the ABM Treaty to other arms control agreements and engaging in efforts to draw international support behind Moscow's foreign policy line, whilst at the same time aiming at cooperative measures to be able to control US BMD policies (Lilly, 2014b, loc. 2846/9198).

Another commentator also argued that Russia's stakes in terms of US BMD were much lower than officially alleged (Podvig, 2001c). In fact, the withdrawal from the Start II process on the

premises of Washington's ABM Treaty abrogation offered economic chances in Moscow's nuclear modernisation plans by preserving MIRVed missiles. Putin himself claimed that:

I would like to point out the fact that Russia, even today, has all the necessary means to penetrate any ABM defences [...] As a result of the ABM treaty being abrogated, and all the relevant constraints being abolished, Russia will have the right to install multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles (MIRVs) (Putin, 2001c).

Lastly, it is possible that Putin miscalculated Russia's diplomatic resolve in US-Russian relations. Former US national security adviser Strobe Talbott alleged that Putin might have thought that the successor of Clinton would not withdraw from the ABMT, thus giving Russia more time to negotiate a stable agreement (Talbott, 2003 Chapter 15). Savelyev, who argued that Moscow's military leadership had convinced the Russian president that the US would 'not dare to withdraw from the ABM Treaty unilaterally', supports this line of argument (Savelyev, 2008: 99).

Despite domestic criticism from various parts of Russia's foreign policymaking elite (Arbatov, Vice Chairman of the Duma Defence Committee, for instance, maintained that it would be a mistake to not threaten to take tough unilateral steps to 'give an additional trump card to the politicians on Capitol Hill who are urging the Bush team to think extremely carefully before doing anything to aggravate Moscow', Yunanov 2001), and the possibility that Russia's agreement could decrease international opposition to US plans, Putin eventually accepted Bush's approach to a new strategic framework with the US (Saffire, 2001). Various factors could have accounted for the change in strategy by the Putin administration. Firstly, with the inauguration of the Bush administration, the Kremlin was deprived of Washington's willingness to support international arms control treaties, including the ABM Treaty. In contrast to the Clinton administration, the new administration did not regard the preservation of bilateral arms control agreements as desirable. Adding to the lost leverage of Russian negotiators was an increasing awareness that the United States would push through its preferred policies and that there was little the Putin administration could do about (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.). However, it is also possible that Putin entered negotiations to preserve an ABMT 'light' after the rejection of Clinton's proposals to change the ABMT had not induced the new US administration to step back from its expansive BMD plans (Shoumikhin, 2002: 313).

An additional reason for the more accommodating policy could have been the changing approaches of European states towards US missile defence policies. As will be discussed below, in contrast to 1999 and 2000, by mid-2001 Russia was deprived of the support of European

NATO member states that had shifted their policy towards supporting Bush's plans on long-range missile defences. Furthermore, by mid-2001, Russia began to accelerate its rapprochement with NATO over a renewed institutional framework at the expense of earlier support for a more independent European Union approach in the field of foreign policy (as discussed in the next chapter). As such, it is likely that Moscow did not want to endanger an institutional rapprochement with NATO once it had concluded that it could not count on the European Union's opposition to US missile defence plans.

The realisation that attempts to strengthen cooperative efforts with Europe had counter-productive effects, in that it seemed to encourage US-European ties, might have led to the realisation that the US held the key in terms of influencing developments in Russia's favour (Forsberg, 2004: 258). Whereas Russia had earlier tried to find alternatives to US missile defence policies by suggesting a US-European-Russian missile defences system (Putin, 2001f), at the Genoa Summit in July 2001 Putin stressed that direct US-Russian negotiations could lead to a satisfactory solution on matters of offensive and defensive weapons (Genoa Summit Meeting, 2001).

Putin's missile defence policy throughout 2001 also drew on changes in Russian domestic policies, in particular the growing realisation that US missile defence plans could not be curbed and that missile defence would not pose an immediate threat to Russian security. At the beginning of 2001, echoing the preferences of the Bush administration, Defence Minister Ivanov called the ABMT a 'relic of the Cold War'. (Solovyev 2001) Members of the Russian military began to argue that the Cold War provisions were in need of a radical overhaul (Odnokolenko, 2001). Sergei Karaganov, chairman of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy, maintained that the unilateral US terminations of the ABM Treaty would in fact benefit Russia, as this would increase the likelihood for Washington's willingness to sign an agreement to bilaterally cut strategic nuclear arms (Karaganov, 2001).

In contrast to the early 1990s when domestic opposition undermined Yeltsin's arms control agenda, Russian policymakers, arms control experts and military leaders supported Putin's more pragmatic course. This was partly due the centralisation of power in Russian foreign policymaking and also Putin's popularity (Secieru, 2006: 25–26). Nevertheless, Putin's change in track remained part of a 'risky' bandwagoning strategy, as former Foreign Minister Primakov maintained (Tsygankov, 2010: 137). Large parts of the public, numerous military leaders and the

majority of foreign policy elite remained opposed to Washington's BMD policies (Tsygankov, 2010: 139). As Belkin highlighted, by opening up to the West after 9/11, 'Putin has acted against the preferences of many important constituencies within Russia.' (Belkin, 2003: 5)

It might have been for this reason that Putin rejected US offers to bilaterally cancel the ABM Treaty. Too much concession to the US might have failed to generate the support of the security elite. According to Lilly, Putin remained cautious to not antagonise influential groups in the military leadership, particularly the general staff, as well as retired, by and large anti-Western generals (Lilly, 2014b Loc 3570/9198). Pushkov from the Council on Foreign and Defence Policies maintained that a bilateral abrogation ran the risk of being perceived as simply following along with the US, and would be a 'sure path to the periphery of world politics, from which we would benefit neither politically nor economically.' (Pushkov, 2001)

Various considerations might have influenced Russia's calm reaction to Washington's eventual abrogation of the ABM Treaty. Firstly, Putin had received agreement from George W. Bush to enter a strategic arms control treaty (Pifer 2014, pers. comm.). As Litovkin highlighted, there was no desire on the Russian side to risk not concluding a legally binding treaty on offensive reductions (Litovkin 2013: 168). It is also possible, as Kozin argues, that the Kremlin concluded that neither of the two strategies – threatening the US with retaliatory measures or negotiating an amended ABM Treaty – eventually generated possibilities for changing Washington's policies (Kozin 2014, pers. comm.). Additionally, the threat stemming from US BMD developments, as argued above, was estimated to be remote for the time being, thereby facilitating the acceptance of US unilateralism (Ivanov 2014, pers. comm).

Broader foreign policy considerations are also likely to have been central in Russia's calm reaction. For Putin, '9/11' not only offered prospects for short-term rapprochement, but opened the opportunity for reaping significant benefits from a long-term US-Russian accommodation (Lo, 2003: 124). As Lo highlighted, Putin was quick to grasp the opportunity to 'Russia's re-entry as an international actor, but this time on a much more solid and positive basis; and a free hand in Chechnya and on domestic politics'. (Lo, 2003: 125)

Various experts contend that the early 2000s were indeed a period of renewed Russian overtures to establishing common institutional mechanisms with the US, if only because of Putin's

‘pragmatism’ in light of Moscow’s economic weakness (Sakwa, 2008: 254; Lieven, 2002: 253; Stent and Shevtsova, 2002: 124). Nichols interpreted Putin’s foreign policy as ‘recognisably a continuation and expansion of Yeltsin’s generally pro-Western line.’ (Nichols, 2002: 13) Arbatova stresses that Putin’s generally accommodating stance was indeed not primarily based on a tactical understanding of America’s superiority, but on the intention to accommodate the ‘West’ in order to develop a relationship based ‘on an equal footing.’ (Arbatova 2014, pers comm.) According to Lieven, the shared sense of threat towards Sunni extremism, Moscow’s need for Western investments, as well as the interests of Russia’s economic elites supported a bilateral rapprochement, irrespective of US missile defence policies (Lieven, 2002: 253–254).

In the wake of ‘9/11’, the continuous preoccupation with nuclear arms control in US-Russian relations gave way to other aspects (Kile, 2003: 605). As Stent highlights, ‘Putin’s broader goals of securing recognition by cooperating with the United States overrode Russian irritation about the downgrading of arms control.’ (Stent, 2014: 74) As Putin highlighted, ‘if we intend to change the nature of the relationship between Russia and the West then this overall question of [nuclear] confrontation will lose its relevance.’ (Putin 2001a) To this was added a renewed window of opportunity for deeper ties with NATO. The creation of the NATO-Russia Council echoed Putin’s earlier request for broader NATO-Russian cooperation and opened up cooperation on wider areas, including counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, arms control, theatre missile defence (TMD) and civil-to-military cooperation. As such the NATO-Russia Council provided an alternative for institutionalised communication on security matters that mitigated the effects on the issue of missile defence (Lilly, 2014b Loc 3127/9198). Putin repeatedly reiterated that the NATO-Russia Council would be an ‘arch of stability’ and that NATO-Russian relations had radically changed (Putin 2002). In 2002, Putin, together with Bush, indeed pledged ‘to work together to develop a new relationship between NATO and Russia that reflects the new strategic reality in the Euro-Atlantic region’. (Bush and Putin, 2002a)

At the same time, the domestic climate in Moscow opened up possibilities for an easing of relations with the US on BMD. Shortly after the terrorist attacks on New York, leading foreign policymakers and retired officials such as Primakov, Lukin, and Rogozin voiced their support for a junior role in relation to NATO as resistance to the US would indeed be ‘too expensive and unpragmatic’. (Pouliot, 2010, loc. 2563) At the same time, for leading former policymakers the Moscow Treaty that was eventually signed between the US and Russia in May 2002 was regarded as a rare occasion in which Russia could preserve the Cold War approach of bilateralism in

world affairs (Stent, 2014: 74). Additionally, as Lilly points out, Washington's active engagement in discussions with Moscow about the mutually coordinated reduction of nuclear arsenals and the future containment of strategic weapons served as a confirmation of Moscow's great power status (Lilly, 2014b Location 3079/9198).

However, other experts believe that the Kremlin's positive reaction to the Moscow Treaty and the termination of the ABMT was a mere attempt to 'save face' domestically so as to not be perceived as weak and accommodating as the Yeltsin administration (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.). Buzhinsky assessed the Moscow Treaty as purely 'symbolic' as it lacked crucial Cold War arms control features (Buzhinsky 2014, pers. comm.). In an interview with the author, Podvig maintained that:

The Putin administration and in particular the foreign ministry had extensively invested in the notion that the ABM Treaty abrogation would "totally destroy" all international legally binding frameworks. It had now to backpedal by arguing that the conclusion of SORT would continue to serve Russia's security interests (Podvig 2014, pers. comm.).

Mathers therefore argued that Putin's emphasis on US-Russian cooperation mainly originated in the his willingness to accept diplomatic defeat with 'good grace [...] perhaps in the hope of gaining some goodwill from the Americans in the process.' (Mathers, 2012: 503) For Shoumikhin, the fact that SORT, which lacked the central provisions of a Cold War arms control treaty in the area of verification, reflected Moscow's lack of power and influence in terms of drawing Washington into Cold War-like agreements based on mutual equality (Shoumikhin, 2011: 121). Neither the emphasis on arms control nor the use of the United Nations as a central means of countering US unilateralism offered the promise of changing the outlook of Washington's BMD policies (Kassianova, 2001: 835). As such, Russia accepted Washington's lead on ABM Treaty issues even though the US lacked the desire to negotiate much with the Russian side concerning potential alterations, in particular after September 2001 (Pifer 2014, pers. comm.).

In summary, contrary to allegations that the Russian president was initially willing to 'bandwagon' along with the US, the diplomatic manoeuvring of Moscow suggest that Russia remained firmly committed to opposing a more unilateral agenda by the US. Only when it

became clear that Moscow could not rely on support in the US and among Europeans did Russia shift to a more conciliatory policy. A breach of arms control treaties, as alleged by the Russian president, could have undermined Moscow's wish to maintain friendly relations with the US, and it would have contradicted Russia's attempt to tie Washington to its commitments under international law.

USA

The Cold War arms control and disarmament approach towards Russia remained at the core of Clinton's strategy. As argued above, the Clinton administration was torn between preserving a multilateral arms control agenda and domestic pressure that questioned the premises of Clinton's international efforts to encourage a comprehensive non-proliferation regime.

According to national security advisor Talbott, the Clinton administration based its missile defence diplomacy on the attempt to appease both domestic forces that supported a unilateral counter-proliferation strategy and Russian President Yeltsin (Talbott, 2003 Chapter 15). Moreover, as was argued above, the Clinton administration's strategy to deflect domestic criticism resulted in prioritising domestic appeasement over US-Russian relations in the nuclear arena. In fact, according to Talbott, the US president was willing to offer more ambitious nuclear reductions to Russia for Moscow's consent to altering the ABM Treaty, but was limited by US military as well as Republican opposition (Talbott, 2003: 376).

The outcomes of the Clinton administration's policies resulted in an attempt to satisfy various parties interested in missile defence issues. First, the Clinton administration sought to lessen Russian fears by actively engaging in cooperative offers on missile defence. The US supported BMD cooperation because it could improve Russia's early warning detection and therefore circumvent incidents such as the misinterpretation of the US-Norwegian test rocket in 1995. It was also hoped that cooperation on an Russian-American Observation Satellite (RAMOS) together with an accord to share early-warning data would help Moscow and Washington to better understand the dangers of missile technology (Powaski, 2003: 198). At the same time, it is likely that US actions reflected an attempt by former Secretary of Defence William Perry to insulate military-to-military cooperation from broader developments in US-Russian relations and the hope that cooperation might spill over into the US-Russian strategic relationship (Mendelson, 2002: 163). Nevertheless, the limited desire by US institutions and the military-industrial complex to seek closer cooperation with Russia raises questions about the genuine

willingness to cooperate (Samson, 2007). A policy advisor to a US Congressman involved in nuclear security issues throughout the 1990s argued that the US Department of Defence lacked any ambition to enter into concrete cooperative missile defence plans with Russia and consciously undermined bilateral efforts supported by the US president (Assistant to Congressman, pers. comm. 2012). Given the scepticism of US officials regarding in-depth missile defence cooperation with Russia, limited bilateral cooperative efforts can be interpreted as an attempt to seek Russian consent for US BMD programmes.

Second, reflecting strategies in other contentious policy fields (Talbot, 2003), Clinton missile defence diplomacy suggests that he sought to isolate Russian officials from Yeltsin so as to extract concessions from the Russian president on BMD-related questions (Podvig 2000). Third, in part based on the non-proliferation principles of the US administration, the Clinton administration aimed at strengthening the framework of mutually assured destruction to soothe Russian fears. This was reflected in the inclusion of arms control provisions in the US Missile Defense Act in 1999 and most clearly by movements that actively encouraged Russia to preserve a second-strike capability against the US and to shift towards a more assertive nuclear posture. These actions also included a provision that suggested a halt of US-Russian bilateral disarmament efforts should Russia feel threatened by US BMD policies ('U.S. Drafts Protocol to the ABM Treaty and Associated "Talking Points"', 2000). However, whereas the Clinton administration was adamant about pursuing various aims simultaneously (altering but strengthening the ABM Treaty, further decreasing the US nuclear arsenal to sustain the bilateral disarmament agenda, diplomatically and militarily containing 'rogues', appeasing Russia), the key factor behind Washington's BMD policy remained the technological development of the long-range system (Talbot, 2003: 382–385). As such, US missile defence policies were determined by technological factors, and not by political considerations with regard to Russia.

Whereas a significant number of officials in the Bush administration had advocated the termination of the ABMT throughout the 1990s, the actual policies of the US were initially cautious. It is likely that several reasons accounted for this development. Firstly, the 'dovish' members of the US administration such as Colin Powell, who maintained significant influence on US foreign policymaking prior to 9/11 (Bolton, 2007: 61), prevailed over nuclear 'hawks' that were pushing for a 'clean and swift' withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. According to Bolton, prior to the first Putin-Bush meeting in June 2001, the US National Security Council contemplated confronting Putin with a 'cold call' that would force him to consent to the US

withdrawal from the ABMT. Powell argued that the summit could be negatively portrayed by the media and could negatively affect US-Russian relations. The outcome of these deliberations, as Bolton maintains, was to not end the ABMT right away, but to outline the US willingness to enter negotiations on offensive and defensive systems with Russia (Bolton, 2007: 57).

Secondly, domestic opposition by the Democratic Congressional majority threatened to undermine funding plans for the BMD policy of the Bush administration (Bolton, 2007: 57). As Auerswald highlighted, the Senate composition of various Congressional committees after Democratic gains in the 2000 election and the defection of James Jeffords (Independent-Vermont) from the Republican Party suggested that ‘the administration [could not] assume that its missile defense initiatives will be supported by Congress.’ (Auerswald, 2001: 76) Democrats openly questioned the long-range missile defence plans of the Bush administration. As the Chairman of the Senate’s Foreign Affairs Committee, Joseph Biden, stressed, ‘I’m not at all certain that we’re going to have an amendment to an ABM Treaty that’s going to get two-thirds vote – you know, an overwhelming vote, even if it’s negotiated.’ (Biden, 2001) The Bush administration sought to deprive the opponents of the yet-to-be-defined BMD plans by stressing Washington’s willingness to radically cut its nuclear arsenal, but opposition among Democrats to terminate the ABM Treaty remained outspoken (Fournier, 2001).

A third reason for the hesitant initial missile defence policies of the Bush administration throughout 2001 was the fact that US missile defence policies had yet to be articulated. Key officials in the Bush administration remained unable to determine the direction of BMD deployments of the US in the first months in office. Given the general challenges with regard to the objectives and responsibilities on BMD shortly after the presidential elections and the diverging interests of ‘hawks’ and ‘doves’ in the Bush administration, it can be argued that the US did not pursue a coherent strategy on BMD in the first months of 2001 (Isaacs, 2001). Fourthly, as will be argued in the next chapter, European scepticism surrounding the plans of the Bush administration initially encouraged the US to pursue a more consensual path to the extent that the US would depend on BMD infrastructure in Europe. As such, the generation of European support required a more balanced and nuanced policy on missile defence than was envisioned by the hawks in the Bush administration.

The domestic constraints on US missile defence policies significantly decreased after ‘9/11’ (Futter, 2011: 157), whilst the influences of ‘nuclear hawks’ such as Wolfowitz increased. As a

result, the US was now willing to abrogate the ABM Treaty without the consent of Russia. However, countering critics in the administration who pushed for an ‘executive statement’ or a ‘joint statement’ and resisted the idea of any binding arms control treaty, it is likely that George W. Bush sought to bring about a bilateral arms control treaty that was eventually signed in May 2002 (Bolton, 2007: 76). According to Kile, the close ties between the US and the Russian presidents, Congressional support, as well as George W. Bush’s personal desire to draw Russia closer to the US as a ‘reward’ for Putin’s cautious statements regarding the termination of the ABMT were indicative of support for an internationally legally binding arms control treaty (Kile, 2003: 600). For Boniface, this move represented a concession that stood out from the unilateralism of the administration in other areas (Boniface, 2001). For Lieven, Bush’s willingness to enter SORT can be regarded as a more ‘status-quo-like’ behaviour of the Bush administration with regard to US-Russian relations (Lieven, 2002: 245). In light of the treaty provisions, however, the US ‘concession’ to Russia was little more than a legal agreement that the US would now be freer in pursuing a nuclear policy more to its liking (Bolton, 2007: 75). At the same time, the unilateral aims of the US nuclear strategy (discussed in the next chapter) do not suggest that the rhetoric on the decreasing significance of the Cold War strategic framework and nuclear weapons should be taken at face value (Bush, 2002: 20). In fact, the US strategy suggests that Washington was willing to grant Russian minimal concessions, whilst insisting that the relationship could ‘not be codified in a “bargain” any more than [US relations] with many other countries’, as John Bolton stated (Bolton, 2007: 63).

A look at core US interests in the early 2000s – NATO enlargement and the termination of the ABMT – suggests that whilst Washington remained willing to grant Moscow some influence in NATO and to preserve ties with Russia in mutually beneficial areas, the desire to increase Washington’s sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and a robust nuclear deterrent that would subjugate potential quests for more global influence among other power centres lay at the core of Bush’s policies.

Impact of BMD on the Broader Relationship

Whereas the previous section sought to interpret Russian and US manoeuvres on missile defence policy, the following sections aims to provide an overview of the impact of BMD on the US-Russian relationship. Whilst BMD remained by and large insulated from other US-Russian

areas of cooperation and negotiation, the US pursuit of territorial defence triggered patterns of behaviour that were at times reminiscent of the Cold War era.

Cooperation on 'Rogue States'

Throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s, there were repeated claims that Russia might embark on a missile and WMD proliferation course should both states fail to come to an agreement on US missile defences. Grand alleged that Russia could 'loosen [its] already weak exports controls and deliberately accelerate missile and WMD technology.' (Grand, 2000) Quinlan highlighted that US National Missile Defence might make Russia 'less disposed to tackle to Western satisfaction [...] risks of "leakage" or know-how or material to outsiders.' (Quinlan, 2001: 40) Shoumikhin argued that Russian diplomacy under Putin in fact deliberately aimed at strengthening Russian ties with US regional adversaries so as to induce the US into preserving the ABMT (Shoumikhin, 2002: 317).

However, it is difficult to establish a clear link of Russia's renewed willingness to engage in arms trade or other means of cooperation with what the US arbitrarily defined as 'rogue states' as a means of protesting against US missile defence policies. Russian overtures to North Korea consisted of a request to halt the DPRK's missile programmes in exchange for international support for foreign rocket boosters provided by other nations to launch an indigenous North Korean space programme (Gordon, 2000). This was met with scepticism amongst US officials (Blank, 2014, pers comm.). However, Russia's desire to support North Korea's space programme does not seem to have been an ad-hoc attempt to undermine US security interests. Rather, it represented a long-standing strategy of Russian diplomacy to seek a reversal of Pyongyang's isolationism while avoiding the nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula ('U.S. Drafts Protocol to the ABM Treaty and Associated "Talking Points"', 2000). One could therefore argue that Russian moves in relation to North Korea represented a conscious effort to accelerate a US-DPRK rapprochement, whilst offering a political alternative to Washington's ballistic missile defence plans. In fact, as Foreign Minister Ivanov stressed:

We feel [...] that a normalization of America-North Korean relations could do much to promote the cause of world peace and enhance strategic stability. It is no secret, after all, that some people have based their plans for upsetting strategic stability and withdrawing from the ABM Treaty on some sort of North Korea's missile threat (Gornostayev 2000).

US National Missile Defence, however, could have had a greater impact on Russian policies towards Iran (Katz, 2002). Putin's announcement to step up Russian arms sales to Iran in

November 2000 might have been related to the failure of securing an American renouncement of its missile defence plans and a way to step up pressure on Washington to preserve the ABM Treaty in its unaltered version (Sychova, 2000). Importantly however, Russia's cooperative approach in the 1990s and early 2000s towards Tehran was driven by various other factors unrelated to US missile defence such as fears over closer Sino-Iranian cooperation in arms trade (Orlov et al., 2002: 122). Moreover, the resumption of conventional arms trade with Iran and the continuation of cooperation on the Buser Nuclear Reactor mirrored a long-held desire to put Russia's interests on a more economically sound footing as the Putin administration interpreted Yeltsin's Iran policies as too accommodating towards the US (Orlov et al., 2002: 134).

Broader bilateral relations with Iran improved because of Tehran's muted criticism of Russia's crackdown on its Muslim population in Chechnya, Moscow's desire to come to terms with its own Muslim population, and Putin's belief that Iran's increasing power in the region required a more stable relationship. Orlov et al. have thus emphasised that Russia's missile and nuclear exports were by and large unrelated to non-proliferation issues (Orlov et al., 2002: 129). For Russian policymakers, Iran-Russian ties and prospects for Russia's export economy were arguably more important than potentially curbing US national missile defence, in particular after Yeltsin's more restrictive export policies have had little impact on Washington's overall missile defence direction (Einhorn and Samore, 2002: 59). Even if Russia's overtures towards Iran might have been related to US missile defence plans, they did not last. From mid-2001 on, Putin reversed Russia's stance on Iran in favour of closer US-Russian ties, despite the US abrogation of the ABM Treaty at the end of 2001 (Katz, 2002: 76).

Disarmament and Arms Control

As argued above, the linkage of the US Congress and the Russian Duma with START II, on nuclear disarmament and missile defence meant that both areas were interconnected. The US Congress remained reluctant to grant the Clinton administration a more ambitious, potentially unilateral disarmament agenda and refused to ratify the 1997 BMD demarcation agreements as long as the Duma would not ratify START II. The Duma was reluctant to ratify START II as long as the US Congress would not ratify the Helsinki demarcation agreements on missile defences. This dynamic remained in place after Putin successfully pushed the ratification of START II through the Duma as he pledged that Russia would withdraw from the treaty if the US were to continue with long-range ballistic missile defence deployments. As a consequence of

the US decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, START II and with it the ban on MIRVed ICBMs and the commitment to destroy Russian SS-18s disappeared (Bohlen 2003: 30).

It is also possible that US missile defence tipped the balance towards Putin's decision to give priority to the modernisation of Russia's strategic forces (as opposed to its conventional forces) after fierce internal battles between the Ministry of Defence and the Russian military (Sutyagin, 2013b, pers. comm.). Russia's Ministry of Defence, the General Staff, as well as Russia's military-industrial complex used the US ABM Treaty abrogation to successfully lobby to reverse plans that would have downgraded Russia's strategic rocket forces (SFR) in favour of conventional military reforms. At the same time, however, it remains unclear whether US missile defence policies have influenced Russia's nuclear modernisation plans at this stage. Shoumikhin argues that US BMD has been 'the strongest argument' that justified the preservation of Russia's long-range missile programme and the extension of the lives of Russia's rusting strategic arsenal (Lilly, 2014b, loc. 554; Shoumikhin, 2011: 114). Podvig, in contrast, maintains that most nuclear policies would have proceeded regardless of US policies. It is thus likely that US BMD was not the sole reason for Moscow's relatively modest nuclear modernisation programme (Podvig 2014, pers. comm.).

At the same time, both the US and in particular the Russian nuclear arsenal were significantly shrinking irrespective of the cancellation of the ABM Treaty, in large part because Russia lacked the economic resources to modernise its strategic forces and because Washington's emphasis lay in a more robust deterrent through technological innovations (thus backtracking from the Cold War 'numbers matter' paradigm). As such, BMD more significantly affected the legal and normative framework in which nuclear disarmament was discussed (Bohlen 2003: 26). Simpson and Nielsen have argued that the termination of the ABMT triggered a widespread feeling that verified comprehensive and restrictive bilateral nuclear arms control agreements would cease to exist (Simpson and Nielsen, 2005: 276).

BMD also reinvigorated the fading importance of nuclear arms control and the Cold War stability paradigm as the US aimed at encouraging Russia to preserve a robust deterrent whilst offering a more ambitious disarmament agenda should Moscow consent to US BMD policies (Rothstein, 2000). In this regard, missile defence disputes preserved the support for a Cold War nuclear deterrence approach. Whereas this development was criticised by disarmament advocates, it might arguably have stabilised US-Russian relations in light of disputes in other

areas such as NATO enlargement and the Kosovo intervention. A general assessment of the impact of BMD on the bilateral relationship must also consider the changes of its importance in the post-Cold War setting. Throughout the 1990s, neither Russia nor the US thought that a direct nuclear confrontation between both states would be likely to erupt. The preoccupation of the US at the end of the 1990s was the security of Russia's command and control system so as to avoid an inadvertent accidental nuclear strike as well as WMD proliferation to 'rogue states'. For Moscow, the military utility of nuclear weapons shifted towards limited tactical use in regional crises scenarios (Sokov 2014b, pers. comm.). In addition, the horizontal spread of nuclear weapons and missiles occupied Russian policymakers arguably more than the vertical proliferation of WMD of the US nuclear arsenal. As Putin highlighted, 'we need to think about the way armaments are developing in the most dangerous direction: the missile direction. (Putin 2001c) Defence Minister Ivanov claimed that 'the United States and Russia no longer consider each other as adversaries, and they face virtually the same threats [...], including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.' (Ivanov, 2000: 16) The 1995 US national security strategy emphasised that US counter-proliferation efforts were solely aimed at preventing the horizontal proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (The White House, 1995). Moreover, the threshold of 'unacceptable nuclear damage' inflicted on the other side (a continuous subject of debates amongst US security circles in the Cold War) decreased to a minimum in the post-Cold War era (Podvig, 2001c). It can thus be argued that US BMD policies undermined a key nuclear disarmament treaty (START II), but that the overall impact on US-Russian relations in the field of military security remained limited.

General Domestic and Foreign Policy Impact of US Ballistic Missile Defence

Whereas the findings above suggest that US missile defence did not significantly undermine broader US-Russian relations and the 'post-9/11' rapprochement, missile defence policy conflicts nevertheless negatively affected US-Russian relations by increasing mutual suspicion and by encouraging dishonest diplomatic exchanges. Disputes on missile defence replicated Cold War-patterns of behaviour in US-Russian interactions. In addition, missile defence fostered negative narratives in both Russia and the US that blamed the other side for undermining the security policy preferences of the other side. Missile defence disputes helped weaken pro-American forces in Russia, and strengthened Russia-sceptic forces in the United States.

In Russia, pro-‘Western’ commentators often lacked the capacity to justify a seemingly ‘irrational’ revival of Cold War military programmes by the US. That the Russian debate on BMD often lacked detailed information about the diverging plans on US missile defence further undermined arguments of supporters of a pro-American foreign policy (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.). At least indirectly, BMD could thus have fostered a more reserved attitude amongst ‘liberal’ audiences inside Russia, thereby impeding the Clinton administration’s aim to strengthen US-friendly parties within Russia. For conservatives, the issue of the ABM Treaty served as an ‘excuse for opponents of a new relationship with America to continue with [...] confrontation of Russian foreign policy.’ (Tsygichko, 2001) As Tsygichko from the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences argued, whilst Putin was predisposed to following the US lead, a ‘fierce attack’ by Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov and representatives of the military-industrial complex quashed a more flexible policy formulation. Moreover, according to Topychkanov, US plans promoted threat assessments among the Russian security community that were continuously applying worst-case scenarios (Topychkanov, 2014, pers. comm.), thereby putting civilian decision makers under increased pressure and prolonging worst-case assumptions surrounding US policies.

In addition, various Russia commentators and officials maintained that the US was actually hiding the true potential of national missile defence behind ‘rogue states’, and alleged their misunderstanding of the gap between US intelligence (that did not single out short-term or medium-term threats to the US) and US policies that seemed to rush towards a build-up of US BMD (Ivanov, 2000: 18). As Putin asserted:

There are no grounds for creating a national missile defence system because nobody threatens the territory of the United States. And the “rogue states” that are referred to won’t be able to create corresponding missile systems in the next 25, 30 or 40 years, if ever, because there are limits to increasing the range of the missiles that they have, and these limits have already been reached (Putin, 2001e).

Because US missile defence policies remained at times incomprehensible for Russian officials, explanations were prone to interpret Washington’s policy as a conspiracy against Russia. It was, for instance, commonly alleged that the US would set up a ‘smoke screen’ of executive-legislative disagreement over the missile defence agenda to intentionally confuse Moscow and to temporarily lull its fears (Chkanikov and Shoumikhin, 1998: 293). Underlying these allegations was a feeling of Russia being relegated to backwardness in the field of technological innovations that was exacerbated by unilateral US policies that sought to ‘break free’ from Cold War

constraints (Chkanikov and Shoumikhin, 1998: 296–297). Russia's grievances over unilateral policies by the US were also detectable in statements of Russian officials contending the US counter-proliferation policies would force Russia into responses that were not in the interest of Russia itself. Defence Minister Ivanov stressed that the development of potential counter-measures against US BMD were an 'unwanted option for Russia, which is focused on solving domestic economic problems and needs a stable international situation, not a renewed arms race.' (Ivanov, 2000: 18)

Throughout the 1990s, the impact of missile defence on domestic discussions was exacerbated by the democratisation of foreign policy discussions and foreign policymaking in Russia. Critics of Yeltsin employed BMD-related issues to undermine the authority of the Russian leadership. Whilst Yeltsin himself was willing to moderately compromise with the US, the domestic attacks on Russia's nuclear policies had an impact on the manoeuvrability of the executive on nuclear-related matters. Yeltsin's missile defence policies were interpreted with scepticism and open hostility by the Russian military. Russian officials perceived US policies as a conscious attempt to side line Moscow's interests by negotiating with an 'unreliable' Russian president (Arbatova, 2014, pers. comm.). As such, missile defence arguably contributed to Russia's 'exploitation narrative', alleging that Yeltsin's pro-Americanism was used to undermine Moscow's interests throughout the 1990s. In addition, according to Topychkanov, the end of the ABM Treaty formed a 'watershed moment because Moscow witnessed how the US was able to withdraw from a key treaty in international relations not because of real threats but because of some internal lobbying in Washington.' (Topychkanov 2014, pers. comm.)

In the US, to bolster the US BMD project at home, but also because of genuine perceptions coming from intelligence assessments and the decline of Russian export controls, the Bush administration reverted to allegations that pictured Russia as 'part of the proliferation problem', even though Russia's relations with North Korea and Iran remained broadly within the confines of international law throughout the 1990s. The Rumsfeld Commission in 1998 highlighted that WMD proliferation could be greatly accelerated through the leakages and purposeful transfers of WMD-related material from Russia. It stated that:

Russia poses a threat to the U.S. as a major exporter of enabling technologies, including ballistic missile technologies, to countries hostile to the United States. In particular, Russian assistance has greatly accelerated Iran's ballistic missile program (Rumsfeld 1998).

Various other policymakers who questioned the sense of missile defence cooperation with Russia echoed the notion of Russia as a 'proliferation problem'. National security advisor Rice argued that 'it would be foolish in the extreme to share defenses with Moscow if it either leaks or deliberately transfers weapons technologies to the very states against which America is defending.' (Rice, 2000) Stephen Hadley, Deputy National Security Advisor in the George W. Bush administration, stated that an effort against proliferation 'cannot be successful if [Russia is] bent on proliferation. It just can't.' (Hadley, 2001)

It is likely that the picturing of Russia as an 'irresponsible proliferator' was interpreted with contempt by Moscow when Russia's national security concept in 2000 had in fact highlighted that 'the commonality of interests between Russia and other states persists with regard to many international security problems, particularly opposing the proliferation of mass destruction weapons'. (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000) According to Buzhinsky, Russian officials perceived the US rhetoric on Russia as part of an attempt to 'sell missile defence at home'. (Buzhinsky 2014, pers. comm.) From Russia's perspective, it was the US plan to end the ABM Treaty and major components of the non-proliferation regime that were likely to increase the danger of WMD proliferation (Ivanov, 2000: 15–16). As such, Russia's opposition to missile defence and Washington's determination to pursue long-range defences developed into narratives that pictured the other side as a danger to international security and stability.

Moreover, whereas official US-Russian approaches were characterised by a seemingly friendly easing of tensions, in particular after 9/11, the actual policy agendas of both sides remained based on more hostile and at times cynical outlooks. Tsypkin has shown that the US in fact enhanced its precision strike capabilities and intelligence against mobile Russian targets, whilst arguing that nuclear weapons would play no role in future bilateral relations (Tsypkin, 2009: 791). The discrepancy between official rhetoric and Washington's actual nuclear posture heightened suspicions among the Russian security elites, thus exacerbating a strongly negative attitude on defence matters towards Washington (as argued in chapter five).

Moscow's international efforts can be partly interpreted as attempts to undermine Washington's authority as a leader in non-proliferation efforts and as an irresponsible stakeholder in global security questions, thus resembling Soviet strategies throughout the Cold War. Likewise, as the next chapter will show, Moscow's cooperation proposals on theatre missile defences in Europe

were first and foremost based on undermining the national missile defence agenda of the United States and to pit European NATO states against the US.

In terms of missile defence cooperation, a pattern of signalling concessions whilst remaining firm on actual policy became established, and would see a regular repetition in the following decade. It is likely that US cooperation proposals on missile defence systems were primarily based on attempts to free Washington's hand in the unilateral pursuit of long-range defences (Graham, 2001: 279–283). Russia, in contrast, hoped to gain lucrative contracts for the country's military-industrial sector and to control US BMD developments from the 'inside' (Podvig, 2003). In geostrategic terms, the Putin administration likely hoped to weaken America's position in Europe by means of cooperative overtures (Filipak, 2006: 253–258). Russia's cooperation proposals on missile defence with Europe were likely based on the desire to circumvent increased US influence on European military policies, and not on genuine cooperation (Sokov, 2001; Kassianova, 2003).

Sokov assessed that cooperative US overtures were primarily used as a mere 'cover up for face saving solutions' on both sides (Sokov 2014b, pers. comm.). According to Sokov, neither of the two sides was in fact willing to take the appropriate measures to deepen cooperation. Research on early cooperation efforts suggests that the bureaucracies on both sides remained unwilling to cooperate with each other (Samson, 2007). In addition, cooperative efforts themselves heightened the contempt of the other side. Alexander Vershbow, US ambassador to Russia (2001-2005), maintained that 'dialogue on missile defense cooperation ... still remains handicapped by Russian military suspicions that we are just trying to steal some of their technology.' (Feiler, 2003) While the *Memorandum of Agreement* in 2000 stated that the US would pay for an early warning centre in Moscow, US negotiators feared that paying for road taxes and customs fees would set the wrong precedent for the by then on-going cooperative dismantlement of weapons-grade uranium and nuclear warheads in Russia. Russian officials, in turn, were unwilling to proceed with the project if US contractors insisted on being exempted from import tariffs and VAT. Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Stephen Rademaker, complained that US officials were in fact always told that 'Russia [is] now very serious about tax collection' when the US side attempted to resolve the issues', suggesting that both bureaucracies were unwilling to seek deep cooperative measures on missile defence (Verlin 2003).

At the same time, misunderstandings also emerged over the 'style' of the bilateral interactions. In the demarcation negotiations in Helsinki in 1997, for instance, Foreign Minister Primakov described the approaches of the US administration as attempting to drive the Russian side 'into a corner'. (Primakov and Rosenthal, 2005: 153) Strobe Talbot recalls that Putin reiterated in one meeting that Russia would find 'adequate responses to US BMD policies' and that there would be 'quite unexpected, probably asymmetrical'. (Talbot, 2003: 396) On one occasion Putin stated that:

I repeat that the American position on the NMD is a major strategic miscalculation, which dramatically increases the strategic threat to the US, Russia and other states. In fact, the American initiatives amount to "cutting off one's nose to spite one's face" (Putin 2000a).

Missile defence also ingrained confrontational post-Cold War US-Russian dynamics in diplomatic exchanges. The US-Russian imbalance of international resolve resulted in a repetitive scheme in which US negotiators offered Russian negotiators a deal concerning how to handle BMD-related issues. According to Graham, US policies resembled the 'table and stick' approach of NATO enlargement conferences, in which the US would put the bottom-line of US plans 'on the table' and clarify what the US would trade in exchange (Graham, 2001: 146–147). As such, the Russian side perceived Washington's policies as 'dictating' the agenda (Podvig 2001a). The feeling that Russia could not influence US decisions did not get lost on Russian officials. According to Talbot, at the 2000 July Summit, Putin reiterated that he would be aware that significant forces would aim at unilateral policies that would side line Russia because Moscow would be 'too weak' to launch yet another arms race (Talbot, 2003: 396). The head of the Duma Committee on International Affairs, Dmitri Rogozin, strongly disliked that Russia had no power to 'make the U.S. change its mind.' (Odnokolenko, 2001) This feeling became more pronounced after the inauguration of the George W. Bush administration. As Defence Minister Ivanov maintained:

Contrary to the Clinton administration that used to take into consideration the negative reaction of Russia to BMD plans [...] the new administration is regarding the issue as a purely technological process, and that worries us a lot ('Russia has developed countermeasures in case the U.S. withdraws from the ABM Treaty', 2001).

On Russia's side, there was an emerging consensus that alleged that Washington would 'owe' Moscow because of Russia's calm reaction to US BMD policies. As Buzhinsky argued, Putin's BMD diplomacy after 9/11 was based on the expectation that Putin would 'get something in return'. (Buzhinsky 2014, pers. comm) With hindsight it could be argued that the seeming

success of Washington's unilateral termination of the ABM Treaty gave way to a future neglect of Russia interests, which would in turn increase Russia's willingness to reverse the accommodative policies of the 1990s and early 2000s (Topychkanov 2014, pers. comm.). Washington's desire to maintain nuclear flexibility (with considerably higher numbers of deployed warheads than originally proposed by George W. Bush) was a reminder of Russia's decline in (negotiating) power after the Cold War.

Nevertheless, it could also be postulated that missile defence diplomacy did not solely have a strongly negative impact on US-Russian relations. In fact, as argued above, US-Russian BMD cooperation contributed to the preservation of a nuclear strategic dialogue, which in turn mitigated some of Russia's concerns regarding the nuclear balance in the future (Lilly, 2014b, loc 3094/9198). Topychkanov maintained that the actual impact of the abrogation of the ABM Treaty was far less severe than the fallout over Washington's Iraq intervention, America's alleged support for 'coloured revolutions' in Eastern Europe, and the Russian-Georgian War (Topychkanov, 2014, pers. comm.). In addition, US missile defence increased the quantity of interactions concerning strategic stability and initially fostered an American approach in which Washington sought to strengthen Russia's security interests by confirming the principle of mutually assured destruction. The diplomacy between 1999 and 2000 suggests that missile defence prolonged Washington's willingness to share some insights of its missile defence programmes and to discuss sensitive security issues with Moscow (Woolf, 2013: 8).

Arms control advocates have criticised the latter approach because it reaffirmed the necessity of nuclear weapons in US-Russian relations and undermined efforts to more ambitiously cut the nuclear arsenals of both sides. However, at a time in which the broader relationship crumbled as a result of NATO's Kosovo intervention, the strategic dialogue arguably helped to dampen some of the effects of the war in Yugoslavia. Moreover, whilst missile defence cooperation might have followed ad-hoc deliberations to present something tangible on the numerous Clinton-Yeltsin meetings (Podvig 2014, pers. comm.), it nevertheless smoothed the way into diplomatic interactions and on-going meetings that preserved exchanges in terms of threat perceptions and military-to-military contacts (Ivanov, 2000: 16). In addition, the ballistic missile defence interactions did not significantly affect the relations between the US and Russian heads of state. In fact, Primakov, Talbott and Bolton's memoirs suggest that throughout multiple presidential meetings, Yeltsin and Putin were willing to find compromises with the US counterparts, which in turn fostered a more benign cooperative atmosphere. George W. Bush

strongly supported a nuclear ‘de-targeting policy’ and a significant reduction of US nuclear arsenals (Bush 2000). According to Bolton, Bush was also less enthusiastic about the US Department of Defence’s quest for ‘flexibility’ in America’s nuclear policy. Bush personally supported a US-Russian understanding on nuclear matters to ‘cement relations with Russia’. (Bolton, 2007: 77).

Conclusion

Towards the end of the 1990s, the divide between Russia and the US on BMD could barely have been sharper. On the one hand the US and its revisionist desire to unilaterally increase the reliance on military technology to counter proliferation underlined by a ‘lost logic of deterrence’ towards ‘rogue states’ (Betts, 2013). On the other hand there was Russia and its desire to boost international law and multilateral non-proliferation regimes underlined by economic and military decline and the reluctance to grant the military-industrial complex the influence it had on Soviet policymaking

However, if the ABM Treaty was at the core of a ‘far-reaching negotiated settlement’ as part of a ‘framework for a new international order’ at the end of the Cold War, as Deudney and Ikenberry have argued (Deudney and Ikenberry, 2009: 44), its partial unravelling in 2001 caused surprisingly little friction. After the termination of the ABM Treaty, there were few indications that the overhaul of the Cold War order would spark Russian complaints about the ‘exploitation’ of its weakness, even though the alleged ‘winner’ of the Cold War dictated the terms (Deudney and Ikenberry, 2009: 42). As such, US missile defence did not have a grave and immediate destabilising impact on US-Russian relations.

The core reason for this development was the vast differences in the economic, military and ultimately diplomatic power. Russia’s weakness eventually deprived Moscow of a coherent foreign policy that would have significantly increased the costs of US decision-making on BMD. Undermining central arms control treaties to retaliate against US policies would have contradicted Russia’s core interests, namely to maintain an internationally multilateral ‘democratic’ order based on international law and non-proliferation regimes. Accelerated cooperation with states that the US identified as ‘rogue states’ could have jeopardised Moscow’s attempt to preserve benign relations with the US and Europe. Moreover, domestic support of the Russian president and the centralisation of power in Russia guaranteed that the Putin

administration could sell nuclear negotiations with the US and the conclusion of SORT as a major accomplishment.

An explanation of the smooth process of the ending of a central Cold War security treaty must also account for the fundamental shifts in the importance of military security-related issues in post-Cold War US-Russian relations. The decreasing importance of mutually assured destruction and missile defence in a strictly military sense (nuclear weapons remained important for symbolic policies) together with the domestic popularity of the Russian president, offered the Putin administration a more flexible stance on BMD-related matters. The increase of importance of the economic 'bracket' in US-Russian relations did not come from Moscow's general consent to US foreign policies, but from the decrease of nuclear military-security related concerns in favour of economic cooperation. The negligible short-term threat of US missile defence policies to Russia's security allowed Moscow to focus on its economic recovery. Lastly, the terrorist attacks on New York in September 2001 offered a promising 'reset' of the bilateral relationship on counter-terrorism, economic integration of Russia into the global economy and renewed efforts to offer Russia a more satisfactory role in NATO.

Yet, to a great extent, the more or less amicable conduct of missile defence diplomacy rested on temporary circumstances. The prevailing antagonism towards a yet to be defined (and deployed) US missile defence system, Russia's political interests in strategic arms control and international law, not least as a means to push the US away from an even more unilateral foreign policy, and the desire to preserve great power equality with the US gave Russia strong reasons to maintain its support for the Cold War arms control regime (Light, 2012). The US-Russian consensus on cancelling out substantial parts of the Cold War arms control framework rested on multiple promises regarding future relations, in particular on Russia's integration into NATO. As argued above, behind US and Russian official statements lay a less benign understanding of the future of global order and an increasing sense that Washington would exploit Moscow's temporary weakness among Russian policymakers (Pikayev et al., 2007: 23). In addition, whereas missile defence issues did not significantly undermine cooperation in other policy fields, the painful process of 'face saving' solutions in Moscow's response to unilateral US policies started to spill over into a narrative that would dominate Russia's policy formulations for the next decade. At the same time, the diplomatic encounters surrounding missile defence reveal the beginnings of heightened cynicism in US-Russian relations that encouraged contempt on both sides.

Chapter 4

NATO-Russian Missile Defence Diplomacy, 1999-2002

After having analysed the impact of US ballistic missile defence on the US-Russian relationship, this section seeks to explore the impact of US BMD on NATO-Russian and US-Russian relations. To account for the impact of US BMD on US-Russian relations, this chapter focuses on European reactions to the US-Russian dispute and the repercussions of European policies for NATO-Russian and US-Russian relations. The chapter will show that while European NATO states sided with Russia on the assessment of the negative repercussions of US BMD on global security, European NATO states eventually sided with US BMD policies, thereby revealing the limitations of an independent European security policy. Second, by analysing the impact of European NATO states on US and Russian policies, the chapter seeks to reveal the dichotomous character of US-Russian relations with regard to European security, highlighting attempts by both the US and Russia to win over European support for the respective missile defence policy preferences. Nevertheless, because of Russia's eventual desire to seek closer ties with NATO and the US after having unsuccessfully tried to separate European and US policy preferences, the issue of US missile defence fell short of detrimentally affecting NATO-Russian relations.

To account for the role of NATO states in US-Russian missile defence relations, the chapter will commence with an overview of the initial perceptions of European NATO states in the area of US-Russian BMD relations. Because Germany, France and the United Kingdom were the central forces behind enhanced efforts to shape a more independent European security and defence policy (ESDP) in the late 1990s, the reactions of the three states are of particular importance. Despite a significant overlap between European and Russian opposition to US missile defence, European NATO states eventually consented to Washington's policies because of broader foreign policy aims. In terms of the impact on NATO-Russian relations, US missile defence enhanced disagreements on military industrial policies among European NATO member states and eventually prevented Russia from having an influence on NATO's missile defence considerations.

Description of events

European opposition to US missile defence policies at the end of the 1990s was based on a rare unanimity amongst European NATO states (Gray, 2002: 23). European policymakers stressed that US long-range missile defence would have a negative effect on nuclear arms control. European officials also alleged that missile defence could undermine the cohesiveness of the transatlantic security alliance and criticised the Clinton administration for failing to include Europe into consultations (Gnesotto, 2000). According to European policymakers, the stationing of defences on US soil could divide the Euro-Atlantic security environment into two diverging spaces. As German Foreign Minister Fischer argued:

There is no doubt that this [NMD deployment] would lead to split security standards within the NATO alliance [which could undermine the] trust that the United States would protect our interests, that the United States as the leading nuclear power, would guarantee some sort of order (Drozdiak, 2001).

A diplomat from a European NATO state stressed that ‘there is [...] the fear that if the system works, American and European security interests will no longer be bound by exposure to the same threats.’ (Drozdiak, 2001) At the same time, European NATO states feared a ‘deligitimisation’ of the concept of nuclear deterrence.

The preservation of Cold War arms control was regarded as a pivotal part of fostering peaceful relations and accelerating nuclear and conventional disarmament with Russia. There was a concern that the potential US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty could ‘overload’ Russia’s (foreign) policy agenda in light of NATO expansion. German policymakers also warned that Russia’s potential nuclear modernisation as a response to US missile defence policies could be blamed on Washington, thereby perpetuating Cold War mindsets among Russian civilian and the military leadership (Cambone et al., 2000: 11). European diplomats argued that US plans did not address the growing dangers of international terrorism (Gray, 2002: iv). Rather than managing international security unilaterally, and thereby potentially antagonising China and Russia, European capitals supported multilateral arms control and non-proliferation policies (Scheffran and Hagen, 2001: 443).

As a result of Europe’s criticism, the European Council published a resolution under the Common Foreign and Security Policy stating that the European Union will work towards ‘the reaffirmation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty as a cornerstone of strategic stability.’ (Council of the European Union, 2000) On behalf of thirty-one European states, Portuguese officials stated that ‘[w]e reaffirm the importance of the ABM Treaty, as one of the pillars of strategic

stability. The [EU] wishes to see that treaty preserved.’ (Council of the European Union, 2000) NATO’s Parliamentary Assembly Committee highlighted the ‘wide divergence of views’ between European states and the US and criticised Washington’s missile defence plans (Hoekema, 2000). The majority of the deputies saw the programme as an unnecessary challenge to NATO’s unity (Lamers, 2000). Britain’s Foreign Minister Hain remained reluctant to considering US plans to use Britain’s radar sites for advancing US missile defences systems (Stocker, 2004: 193).

At the same time, European NATO allies found themselves fundamentally in line with Russian arguments on the desirability to preserve the ABM Treaty (Lamers, 2000 Para. 31). Missile defence was thus not only a field in which a European-Russian rapprochement and emancipation from US policies seemed to be likely, US national missile defence policies also had the potential to trigger ‘incalculable consequences for the Alliance as a whole’, as Cambone et al. have highlighted (Cambone et al., 2000). At the same time, US policies threatened to undermine attempts to foster a more sovereign European defence policy should Europe accept the US plans, as Tertrais argued (Tertrais, 2001: 21).

European policymakers supported Russian proposals for European-Russian theatre missile defence cooperation. German Chancellor Schröder maintained that a pan-European theatre missile defence system was ‘really worthy of consideration [...] There cannot be lasting peace in Europe if Russia is not included.’ (Lisagor, 2000) France voiced its criticism of US missile defence plans through the United Nations by supporting Sino-Russian-Belarusian initiatives that condemned US policies and called for the preservation of the ABM Treaty (United Nations, 2000).

Nevertheless, European opposition to US policies remained limited. None of the European NATO states challenged the right of the United States to deploy long-range missile defences. European governments remained reluctant to substantially interfere in the US-Russian dialogue on the ABM Treaty (Sénat de la Republique francaise, 2000). German Foreign Minister Fischer emphasised that national missile defence was ‘solely a decision of the United States, not of Europe.’ (‘Raketenabwehr: Fischer mahnt zur Zusammenarbeit’, 2001) There was no broad support for excluding the US from deliberations on missile defence. In fact, heads of state sympathetic to the Russian fears surrounding ‘strategic stability’ and the preservation of the ABM Treaty supported internal NATO discussions ahead of a possible integration of Russia into the consultations (Schröder, 2001). When Russia proposed to discuss its theatre missile

defence cooperation plans with European states in the context of the emerging European Security and Defence Policy, Europe's great powers were unwilling to discuss Moscow's rapprochement in a European context without the participation of Washington (Rontoyanni, 2002: 824).

At the same time, Washington's threat estimates with regard to the danger posed by 'rogue states' were not rejected out of hand, even though most disagreed with the imminence of the problem (Vaisse, 2001). European diplomats increasingly welcomed the willingness of the US for widespread discussion on new threats and potential counter-proliferation initiatives (Cambone et al., 2000: 15). Moreover, different approaches to the US missile defence challenge soon became visible among European governments. Whereas France supported an openly confrontational policy towards the US, the Blair government chose to consult with the US through bilateral ministerial channels. From early 2001 onwards, the initial unity of European approaches developed into an outright split between the United Kingdom and France, with the former now calling the Bush administration missile defence plans as a 'net gain' for international security (Womack and Bishop, 2001). In a joint US-British statement with George W. Bush in February 2001, Blair maintained that the emerging missile threat would warrant 'a strategy that encompasses both offensive and defensive systems'. (Bush and Blair, 2001)

Whereas initial Russian proposals on Euro-Atlantic theatre missile defence cooperation had been welcome in 2000, Putin's renewed cooperative efforts in early 2001 were met with scepticism among European officials. NATO Secretary Lord Robertson reiterated that Russia's proposals would be a mere attempt to 'drive a wedge between NATO allies and the US.' (Gordon, 2001) German officials interpreted Russian diplomacy as a heavy-handed attempt reminiscent of the Soviet period (Cambone et al., 2000: 10). Russia's attempts to encourage theatre missile defence cooperation with Europe were increasingly interpreted as a blunt attempt to cause political disruption. The Blair administration turned into an open supporter of US national missile defence (Straw, 2002). In fact, according to Stocker, the British BMD policy constituted a 'dramatic [...] sea-change in official British thinking, which since the mid-1960s has consistently viewed deployment of missile defences as destabilising.' (Stocker, 2004: 203) The French Chirac government started to perceive an alliance-wide system as an opportunity for its military-industrial complex and toned down its criticism (Klein, 2001: 831).

By mid-2001, Russia had become more disillusioned with attempts to cooperate with the European Union on missile defence. Russia's concept of promoting a more independent European security sphere with increased Russian influences clashed with Europe's caution regarding the creation of an independent security force that would be to a degree de-coupled from the US (Lynch, 2004: 111). After 9/11, as Gray highlighted, missile defence as part of a wider homeland defence effort became 'perennial among American desiderata [and] has come to be accepted in Europe as a fact of transatlantic political life.' (Gray, 2002: 14)

Europe's Foreign and Missile Defence Policy: Description and Interpretation

Whereas the above section has provided the general context in which NATO-Russian policies took place, this section aims at accounting for the development of Europe's attitudes towards US missile defence policies. It will do so by looking at the underlying factors of policies of Germany, the United Kingdom and France. The next section will then assess Europe's influence on US and Russian foreign policymaking and the repercussions for NATO-Russian and US-Russian relations.

Germany

US missile defence policies were a direct challenge to Germany's broader post-Cold War aims that were based on an active policy conducted by the European Union, the preservation of close links with Washington and a 'strategic partnership' with Russia (Staak 2008: 31). Washington's unilateral national missile defence posture allegedly contradicted Berlin's normative multilateralism, its support of international law, bilateral and multilateral arms control regimes as well as a general predisposition to seeking global nuclear disarmament (Müller, 1999). Conservatives shared the negative attitudes of the SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)-Green Party Coalition government with regard to US long-range missile defences (Rühe, 2001).

The desire to preserve friendly ties with Moscow resulted in a policy that emphasised American and Russian responsibility to preserve the strategic arms reduction dynamics (Bundesregierung, 2000). As one German Member of Parliament stressed, German diplomacy was caught between resisting the temptation to neither solely 'cooperate' with, nor 'solely confront' Russia (Lamers, 2001). At the same time, Berlin excluded the option to counter US policies unilaterally, stressing the importance of coming to multilateral solutions among European states (Schröder, 2001). Germany's foreign policy surrounding missile defence remained caught between a generally

sceptical attitude regarding Washington's missile defence plans and the desire to avoid isolation within NATO (Scharping, 2001).

Despite criticisms of US unilateralism, there was a widespread feeling among German policymakers who feared Washington's absence from European security more than potential Russian isolation. Germany favoured a long-term US commitment to European and transatlantic security in accordance with the majority of NATO allies (Fischer, 2001). As a result, whilst Germany initially championed a European response to the BMD challenge, it eventually consented to channelling objections through NATO as opposed to forming a European consensus that would then present the US with a *fait accompli* (Filipak, 2006: 277).

United Kingdom

Britain's initial diplomatic response to US BMD policies was based on preserving its 'special relationship' with the US, whilst championing multilateral arms control, a more significant role for the European Security and Defence Policy and closer ties with Russia (David, 2011: 203). As such, it was feared that Britain's support for US missile defence deployments could endanger British relations with Russia (Cambone et al., 2000: 19). London's reactions to US missile defence were also shaped by the fact that Washington's national missile defence architecture depended on cooperation with the United Kingdom. Initially, the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Commons argued that it should not be taken for granted that the US could utilise the Fylingdales radar to upgrade the US missile defence system (UK House of Commons, Foreign Affairs Committee, 2000: xvii). According to Stocker, NMD posed a real dilemma for the British government:

The nature of its close defence and intelligence ties made Britain more sensitive to American security concerns, and more reluctant to openly criticise US policy [...] On the other hand, Britain had real concerns about NMD and wanted to be seen, in security terms, as a 'good European' (Stocker, 2004: 194).

As a result, according to Stocker, the Blair government's policy resembled 'an official policy to have no policy.' (Stocker, 2004: 194) The British government sought to meet the various challenges by keeping the issue down domestically, and by supporting US-Russian efforts on missile defence policy (Cook, 2002: 200). Whereas the Blair administration remained willing to grant Russia a significantly greater role in NATO-Russian relations, it eventually rallied behind US demands. The shift towards greater acceptance of US strategic needs was based on the desire

to circumvent further criticism among US officials along with the British media regarding Blair's commitment to a stronger ESDP as well as a broader shift that emphasised scepticism towards granting Europe a greater independent role in military affairs. Britain's initial desire to support the arms control regimes of the Cold War and the emerging European Security and Defence Policy eventually boiled down to a breaking of (fragile) European unity (Pierre, 2001).

France

By the end of the 1990s, France was the fiercest European critic of US foreign policies. According to France's Foreign Minister Védérine, French foreign policy aimed at setting up an independent European foreign policy to move towards a multilateral world order (Védérine, 1999). One commentator even alleged that the US missile defence issue would be 'heaven-sent' for Paris, 'because it is an issue area wherein France can encourage a large coalition of NATO-Europeans to oppose U.S. policy.' (Gray, 2002: 10)

Paris also opposed Washington's policies because it potentially undermined the political and military significance of France's nuclear deterrent. French officials additionally argued that US moves would eliminate the decade-old global nuclear disarmament and arms control framework. A report by the French Senate in mid-2000 saw Washington's moves as an unnecessary deflection from developing Europe's Security and Defence Policy (Sénat de la République française, 2000).

Nevertheless, French policymakers were also wary of a potential split of the NATO alliance over US NMD (Sénat de la République française, 2000). Signs of a changing French approach to deterrence (away from a belief that deterrence would work in any crisis scenario) and the potential industrial benefits related to participation in a potential territorial defence system for NATO changed the approach of the Chirac administration towards cautiously accepting Washington's policies (Cambone et al., 2000: 19).

Underlying Factors in European BMD Policies

The above suggests that the major European powers were wary of granting Russia a central role in European security affairs at the expense of US influences. Part of the reasons for this reluctance was the support for America's central role in shaping European security affairs. As German Foreign Minister Fischer outlined with regard to the potential implications of US

missile defence, 'the security and cohesion of the Transatlantic Alliance must be preserved and strengthened'. (Fischer, 2001) Multiple European states developed a friendlier attitude to US plans because of a perceived necessity to fix some of the broader developments in transatlantic relations in the early 2000s (Daalder, 2001). Moreover, there was a realisation among European policymakers that Europe itself could do little to determine the outcome of US policies (Pierre, 2001). Because of the potentially detrimental effects on seeking to find a compromise between the US and Russia, European diplomats were also wary of becoming a 'political football' in US-Russian negotiations over US national missile defence (Fergusson, 2000: 26). In addition, multiple states including the major European powers regarded BMD as not being important enough to cause a major disruption in relations with the US (Pierre, 2001).

The cautious policies among NATO members partially derived from the fragmentation of Europe's security policy, which in turn deprived Europe from a more forceful voice in the missile defence dispute. Whereas French Foreign Minister Védérine had voiced the desire to create an independent European foreign policy to move towards a multilateral world order that would be able to function as a counterbalance to American 'hyper-puissance' (Védérine, 1999), Britain's Secretary of Defence, Jeff Hoon, maintained that 'NATO remains, and will remain, the only game in town. It will be the sole organisation for collective defence in Europe.' (Cited in Howorth, 2000: 55) Inherent distinctions between Britain's vision of anchoring European security with transatlantic security, Paris' preference for a Western European 'hard power' identity, and Germany's multilateral 'soft power' ultimately prevented a common European policy on US ballistic missile defence.

The response of the major European powers also reflected a broader development towards a fragmentation of national foreign policymaking in the post-Cold War era (Peters, 2004). In the United Kingdom, to name one example, there was a divide between the Foreign Ministry and the Defence Ministry on the desirability of supporting Washington's missile defence policies. Whilst officials in France saw a potential Euro-BMD as an unnecessary distraction from enhancing European military capabilities, there were also voices that stressed the economic benefits of participating in a NATO-based missile defence project. Remarks by Defence Minister Alain Richard were considerably more cautious than French President Chirac's fierce criticism of the US programme (Klein, 2001: 844). Kubbig and Nitsche have stressed that in Germany, dividing lines on US missile defence not only ran between institutions, but through individual ministries (Kubbig and Nitsche, 2005).

The desire among EU officials and the European military industry to cooperate with Russia on missile defence systems, moreover, was limited. Few European NATO states were willing to grant Russia an enhanced role as a military security provider to Europe. As such, Russia's cooperation proposals on theatre missile defence were regarded as too ambitious and detrimental to European interests (Filipak, 2006: 256). Moreover, according to Kamp, the European military-industrial complexes remained more interested in pursuing cooperation with the US than with Russia (Kamp 2014, pers. comm.). By the early 2000s, some military experts alleged that US-European missile defences cooperation could launch the 'greatest alliance project of all times'. (Hill 2001)

Lastly, European opposition to US missile defence also crumbled because multiple governments regarded the support for US policies as a means to pursue deeper ties with the US administration. Denmark's agreement to the US radar in Thule, Greenland, hinged upon Copenhagen's desire to preserve a strong link to the US in light of Denmark's unease with a strengthened ESDP (Dragsdahl, 2005: 50). The Italian and Spanish governments came to support the US project mainly to enhance their political status with the US by embracing national missile defence (Müller, 2001: 33). After initial scepticism, the Polish government increasingly welcomed overtures of the Bush administration to potentially locate US missile defences in Eastern Europe.

Europe's Role in US and Russian BMD Policies

Whilst the above section suggests that broader foreign policy aims of European powers and divisions among and within European states were pivotal in changing attitudes on BMD, the following sections seeks to assess the impact of European policies on the US and Russia foreign policy agenda.

Influence on US Policies

Europe's scepticism likely influenced the Clinton administration's deliberations on BMD. US foreign policymakers were wary of a potential split with Washington's European NATO allies (Talbot, 2003: 380). However, for the Clinton administration, the key to European consent on missile defence was based on the idea of seeking an agreement with Russia. As Secretary of Defence, William Cohen, highlighted, 'the allies [...] will support us if there is an agreement on

the part of the Russians [...] But unless the allies remain behind us, then the Russians are unlikely to agree.’ (Cited in Biden, 2000)

As such, it is difficult to establish a link between the Clinton administration’s awareness of the criticism of Washington’s European allies and the concrete impact of Europe on US decision-making. Whilst true that the Clinton administration focused on finding a comprehensive way of dealing with NATO allies and Russia, the technological challenges of missile defence, as well as the emerging costs whilst aiming to preserve Clinton’s multilateral non-proliferation agenda (Talbot, 1999), the most pivotal factor on US policymaking remained defined by domestic pressure and technological development of the long-range systems. Moreover, Clinton’s focus on Russia indicates that the concerns of Washington’s European allies were only a minor factor in US policy formulations. Talbot’s memoirs suggest that US movement towards ABM Treaty changes and deep nuclear cuts remained at the centre of Washington’s attempts to assuage Russian concerns (Talbot, 2003: 382).

After the inauguration of the Bush administration, the role of European NATO allies shifted into domestic attempts to criticise the plans of the George W. Bush administration. Democrats in Congress repeatedly invoked European opposition as one major reason as to why a global BMD system would have to be regarded with caution. Senator Biden emphasised in a Senate Hearing that ‘most [allies] are deeply sceptical, and strongly oppose any initiative which would jettison the existing arms control framework’. (Biden, 2001: 7) Senator Torricelli stressed that ‘it is the height of illusion to believe that [...] Europe, [...] believes in this administration’s approach to the ABM Treaty.’ (Torricelli, 2001: 38) As such, European scepticism remained at the core of Democratic attempts to halt long-range missile defence developments of the Bush administration.

However, Europe’s growing agreement with the plans of the Bush administration increasingly deprived Democrats of utilising NATO allies as a means to undermine Bush’s long range missile defence plans, in part because the Bush administration sought to alleviate European concerns via regular dialogue, a less critical stance on the European Security and Defence Policy and the inclusion of Europe into the US shield (G. Robertson, 2001; Osborn, 2001). In fact, multiple allies started to endorse US plans to expand the US shield based on the premises that Europe would be included in the defensive measures of the US (Hagel, 2001: 40). As John Bolton highlighted in mid-2001, ‘we have consulted very extensively with the Europeans [...] and I

think [...] attitudes [...] have been changing.’ (Bolton, 2001: 52) At the NATO Summit of Foreign Ministers in May 2001, the Polish military voiced its desire to station some of the US missile defence equipment on Polish territory. After initial caution on the Polish side, Defence Minister Kosorowski welcomed US plans as an opportunity to ‘lock’ the US into Europe’s security architecture (Osica, 2002).

It is likely that the Bush administration’s shift towards endorsing US-European cooperation was partly designed to deprive Russia of allies in its multilateral coalition against US policies. Filipak highlighted that the US was unwilling to give Russia a greater say in European defence matters by rejecting Moscow’s European cooperation overtures (Filipak, 2006: 256). In fact, according to Kassianova, the US was also inclined to view Russian endorsement of European-Russian theatre missile defence cooperation as an affront to the US (Kassianova, 2003: 3). Michael McFaul pointed out that any European theatre missile defence cooperation without the US was based on ‘fantasy’. (McFaul, 2001) Instead, it is likely that the US endorsed the inclusion of Europe in its own theatre missile defence system, in part to strengthen the cooperation among European allies. As NATO’s Secretary General Robertson maintained:

Missile defense is and should be the subject of deep reflection and consultation in NATO. We have an obligation to protect our societies. And we must ensure that our own military capabilities remain relatively less vulnerable, so that they remain effective in all situations (Lord Robertson, 2001a).

Influence on Russian Policies

Russia’s initial cooperative approaches to theatre missile defences have to be seen in a broader framework of the improvement of European-Russian relations and the crumbling of NATO-Russian relations towards the end of the 1990s. Russian officials were wary of NATO’s new strategic concept involving ‘out of area’ missions. Moscow also criticised the allegedly decreasing importance of the UN Security Council and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as a result of a strengthening of NATO’s strategic outreach (Forsberg, 2005). At the same time, the European Council endorsed a ‘political dialogue [with Russia] including through the important role to be played by the Secretary-General of the Council, High Representative for the CFSP’. (The European Council, 1999) In turn, Moscow’s *Medium Term Strategy for the Development of Relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union (2000-2010)* emphasised the desirability of European-Russian security cooperation shifting away from ‘NATO-centrism’ and towards enhanced pan-European security measures (Russian Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, 1999). For Russian policymakers, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) had the potential to demonstrate the possible costs that European over-reliance on the US would have (Splidsboel-Hansen, 2002).

From 1999 onwards, Russia consistently aimed at countering US missile defence policies through attempts to draw European capitals onto Russia's side (Podvig, 2001a). This approach likely reflected a broader attempt by Russia to join efforts with the EU in pressing the US on issues where EU and Russian approaches converged (Rontoyanni, 2002: 819). Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov stressed the 'difficult situation' of America's European allies who would become vulnerable to strikes from the missiles that Washington would be defending itself against by means of ballistic missile defence (Ivanov, 1999). Putin maintained that:

It is important that the European states come out for the preservation of the Russian-American ABM Treaty of 1972 and thus in favour of strategic stability in the world [...] By hosting elements of the US national missile defence system, [Europe risks to be dragged] into a process that would upset strategic stability in unpredictable ways. The price may be very high: [...] Russia would have to consider options not only of withdrawing from START, but from the Medium and Shorter Range Treaty, the conclusion of which was conditional on the legal and military framework of the START-2/ABM process (Putin 2000a).

Moreover, it is also likely that the afore mentioned strategy to employ Gorbachevian language in nuclear disarmament efforts was in part tailored for European audiences who regarded the last Soviet leader in highly positive terms. If attempts to convince US policymakers about a neo-Gorbachevian policy would fail, it was at least likely to cause support among European diplomats who saw Gorbachev's caution and consent to 'Western' policies in a favourable light (Graebner et al., 2008: 376).

Russia's proposals in mid-2000 and February 2001 for joint theatre missile defence cooperation with Europe were likely driven by diplomatic gambits to offer an alternative to Washington's plans to modify or terminate the ABM Treaty (Odnokolenko, 2000). At the same time, as Sokov argued, rather than being driven by a desire to 'split NATO', Moscow's renewed efforts could have been based on the desire to participate in a Western military project to gain access to defence markets (Sokov, 2001). According to Filipak, access to European markets would have allowed for a greater influence on NATO's military policies. In fact, it potentially would have allowed Russia to gain a key position in questions over European defence matters. This aim was therefore in line with Russia's desire to be further integrated into European security mechanisms

(Putin, 2001g). Technological cooperation between Russia and NATO-Europe could have been interpreted as a necessity among Russian policymakers if Moscow wanted to elevate itself to being one of the 'global centers of military might in the 21st Century'. (Arbatov, 2003) The inclusion of Russian theatre missile defence systems into a European project could therefore have been a 'real world' test for Europe's willingness to consider a substantial integration of Russian into ESDP-mechanisms, as Filipak speculated (Filipak, 2006: 258).

Whereas Europe's sceptical attitudes towards US plans likely encouraged Moscow's opposition to Washington's plans, Europe's lukewarm responses to Russian theatre missile defence cooperation proposals in 2001 might have contributed to an overall shift towards endorsing the cooperation with the US and NATO (Lynch, 2004: 111). As Menon stressed, 'Russia's weakness and the continuing centrality of NATO for European security [eventually frustrated] its efforts to use the NMD controversy to separate America from Europe.' (Menon, 2001: 585) According to Ivanov, NATO-Russian BMD approaches contributed to a general sense among Russian officials that Europe was either unable or unwilling to pursue a more independent defence policy (Ivanov 2014, pers. comm.). The realisation that a strengthening of cooperative efforts towards European security had counterproductive effects in that it potentially strengthened European-US ties might have led to the realisation that the US was regarded as the key factor for further developments in the field of missile defences (Forsberg, 2004: 258).

Impact on NATO-Russian Relations

US missile defence plans affected the NATO-Russian relationship in two ways. Firstly, the diverging preferences of Russia and the US on missile defence eventually encouraged European NATO states to side with Washington's plans. Secondly, attempts to 'win over' European consent on missile defence triggered a return to Cold War-like behaviour on both sides. However, the eventual change in Russia's missile defence policy spared Europe from a more significant challenge to NATO's unity. Whereas the European influences on US missile defence policies remained marginal, Europe's initial objections to the US plans and its eventual endorsement of US plans were contributing to both Russia's initial campaign against US missile defence policies as well as Moscow's eventual consenting to the abolition of the ABM Treaty.

Whilst Europe unanimously shared Russia's assessment of US missile defence, it decided to put its support behind Washington's plans. This was most clearly expressed by the preference to channel discussions through bilateral (in particular US-British) or NATO-wide channels, and not

through European institutions. For the US and European NATO states, the unity of the alliance on matters of missile defence remained more important than Russian concerns and opposition (US Congress, 2001: 38–43). As such, US missile defence policies were reflective of broader patterns of US-European-Russian relations. Strauss identified the fostering of a NATO-wide alliance consensus as a primary stumbling block in Russian-NATO relationship throughout the early 2000s (Strauss, 2003: 324). Against the backdrop of European fears that US missile defence could lead to inter-alliance divisions, US policies had the effect of increasing the division between Europe and Russia despite the lack of consensus in the policy field.

At the same time, whilst couched in cooperative rhetoric, Russia's approaches to missile defence cooperation as well as Washington's scepticism towards granting Moscow a central role in developing military-to-military relations was symbolic of the competitive nature of Euro-Atlantic security. It is likely that Russian policymakers aimed at constraining US unilateralism by multilateral means that sought to undermine US efforts in the area of missile defence. As the First Deputy Chief of the Russian General Staff, Baluyevski, stated:

If we really do develop by collective resources a collective missile-defence system in Europe or Asia, this would prevent to a considerable extent a monopoly on the part of the United States, which we today perceive and which our European colleagues perceive (cited in Kassianova, 2003).

At the same time, whilst being willing to discuss cooperative missile defence relations between NATO and Russia, the transatlantic alliance did not aim to grant Moscow an enhanced role in military-to-military affairs. As NATO Secretary General Robertson affirmed, cooperative efforts on ballistic missile defence cooperation between NATO and Russia would be based on changes in 'chemistry [rather] than in arithmetic'. (Lord Robertson, 2001b) Likewise, statements by NATO leaders were preferring to preserve the unity of NATO against Russian aggression, which was portrayed as being a mere attempt to 'divide' the alliance. Europeans were united in calling Russian proposals for a cooperative theatre missile defence boost-phase system to replace US national missile defence as an unsubstantiated move that was engineered to expose the destabilising character of US policies, in particular with regard to preserving the ABM Treaty (Cambone et al., 2000: 10). For the Bush administration, the eventual inclusion of European allies into the US system remained more important than the desire to come to an agreement with Russia. Russian officials, in turn, felt unfairly rejected by European policy makers (Sokov, 2001). As such, approaches towards 'winning over' European support often resembled zero-sum policies that enhanced dichotomies between the former Cold War adversaries.

Eventually, however, Russia's 'pragmatic Westernism' in the early 2000s spared the alliance from confronting a potential challenge to its internal coherence (Tsygankov, 2006: 131). After the inauguration of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002, a German diplomat stressed that 'we were worried a year ago that Bush's position would create a terrible confrontation [...] Maybe we underestimated Putin's creativeness and farsightedness.' (Cited in US Government Printing Office, 2002: 8555) European diplomats were eventually satisfied with the US-Russian rapprochement on nuclear disarmament efforts and the image of Putin increased considerably (Milbank, 2002).

Conclusion

Throughout the early 2000s, strategic cultures, domestic power arrangement, as well as general foreign policy aims prompted major European powers to follow a path that conflicted with their security priorities and undermined a more coherent foreign policy outlook on missile defences. The core reason for Europe's eventual failure to more forcefully oppose the US agenda was its internal fragmentation. As a consequence, the European front against the US was never as strong as perceived, and as was desired by Moscow. In addition, European states were eventually relieved that the Bush administration sought to include Europe in the defensive US umbrella. In terms of the impact on NATO-Russian relations, US ballistic missile defence triggered a chain of actions and reactions that contributed to a general development that deprived Russia of its international anti-US missile defence policy 'alliance'. Nevertheless, apart from potentially contributing to Russia's shift from emphasising the European Security and Defence Policy towards endorsing cooperation with NATO, the actual impact of US missile defences on NATO-Russian relations and US-Russian relations remained limited.

Chapter 5

US-Russian Ballistic Missile Defence Diplomacy, 2005-2008

This chapter seeks to answer what caused the European missile defence crisis in 2007 and 2008, what was behind Washington's and Moscow's actions and reactions in the field of missile defence, and what specific impact missile defence had on the US-Russian relationship. The chapter argues that US missile defence did not have a disruptive impact on the US-Russian relationship. The Kremlin remained unwilling to undermine the bilateral relationship and instead sought economic cooperation and bilateral arms control with the US. In this regard, Russian rhetorical assertiveness must primarily be interpreted as a means to reach a compromise with the US on missile defence.

The impact of ballistic missile defence on the bilateral relationship in the mid-2000s did not lie in a visible, increasingly likely confrontation (the possibility of a mutual nuclear attack remained as limited as ever in the post-Cold War environment) or substantially diminished cooperation in other areas, but in the fostering of mistrust and suspicions and the reinforcement of pre-existing narratives. Whilst increasing frictions over the military and geostrategic repercussions of Washington's European missile defence sites were the core cause for mutual resentment, differing US and Russian foreign policy outlooks exacerbated the crisis itself. In contrast to the early 2000s, there was no common vision of closer Russian-NATO cooperation and anti-terrorist operations that could have relegated nuclear-related security questions to being second-order issues.

To highlight the positions of the US and Russia, the chapter commences with a description of the 'European missile crisis'. By analysing Russian and US foreign and domestic policies in general and Moscow and Washington's ballistic missile defence policies in particular, the chapter shows that the causes for mutual hostilities were based on geostrategic considerations and distinct domestic priorities. The chapter goes on to argue that neither cooperative efforts nor negotiations over transparency measures significantly decreased grievances. By focusing on the role of US ballistic missile defence in other US-Russian cooperation efforts and mutual hostilities, and by outlining the direct consequences of failures to compromise, the chapter concludes that that US ballistic missile defence perpetuated antagonistic thinking in US-Russian relations.

Description of events

In May 2002, the US-Russian declaration entitled *New Strategic Relationship Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation* seemed to put an end to the decade-long debates on ballistic missile defences (Bush and Putin, 2002b). Through the so-called ‘Working Group Number 2’ both parties aimed at strengthening mutual trust and at increasing transparency in the area of missile defence through on-going high-level negotiations. The agreement also mentioned potential programs for the joint research and development of missile defence technologies (US Department of State, 2002).

However, as the US Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation, Rademaker, argued, the negotiations mechanisms surrounding strategic issues ran into difficulties shortly after the signing of the Moscow Treaty (Rademaker, 2004). Discussions on the SORT follow-up treaty stalled despite Russian actions to perpetuate a legally binding framework beyond 2009 (the time when the START I verification regime would end). Reflecting the disdain of legally binding arms control agreements among officials of the Bush administration, the US position was that detailed technical arms control agreements were not the future of Washington’s relationship with the Russian Federation. The US seemed equally unwilling to accept Russian actions regarding the ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and the broadening of restrictions on military activities in space (‘End of Russian-US strategic arms control?’, 2006).

When the US suggested that it might deploy missile defence interceptor sites in Europe, Russia’s increasingly more negative attitudes towards US policies became openly hostile. In February 2005, Russian Defence Minister Ivanov attacked US plans to expand missile defence facilities to the United Kingdom, Denmark, and potentially to Eastern Europe, warning that this ‘could [...] negatively impact the entire Euro-Atlantic security system.’ (Cited in Weitz, 2005: 70–71) The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated that Russia would consider the deployments as being directed against Russia (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004).

In January 2007, the US administration officially announced its plans for the deployment of a fixed radar installation in the Czech Republic, and ten silo-based interceptor missiles in Poland, as well as mobile radar positioned in the vicinity of Iran. While Russia’s political elites continued to link their objections to the detrimental impact of US ballistic missile defence on the US-

Russian nuclear balance, Russia also reverted to explicit statements that threatened to increase Russia's nuclear capabilities (Harding, 2007). Russian officials linked the moratorium on the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty to US missile defence policies and argued that Moscow would consider leaving the Intercontinental Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) as a response to the third site plans of the US (Sevastopulo, 2007). Nevertheless, the Russian side remained prepared to revert to cooperative efforts and maintained that it would support coordinated efforts for joint threat assessments ('Russia rejects U.S. missile defense proposals.', 2007). The Kremlin's chief spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, maintained that Russia would pursue military counter-measures, but that Russia's president also wanted 'dialogue' and 'negotiations'. (Harding, 2007)

Whilst calling Russia's reactions 'exaggerated', the US side sought to counter Russian objections by reassuring Moscow that the third missile defence site in Eastern Europe would not be able to intercept Russian ICBMs (Strokan 2007). US officials also proposed that there could be a partnership in the area of missile defence and that the NATO-Russian Council could serve as a forum for such efforts (Rice and Gates, 2007). At the same time, Washington alleged that its decision to station missile defence components in Poland and the Czech Republic was 'non-negotiable' ('Talks make little progress towards solving US/Russian discord', 2007).

At the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm, Germany in June 2007, Putin proposed a cooperative system between the US and Russia. The proposals envisioned cooperation on one early warning radar leased by Russia from Azerbaijan and the build-up of a joint radar system in southern Russia. The Russian side argued that the cooperation in terms of the radars would enhance US ability to observe developments inside Iran. To replace the third site in Poland and the Czech Republic, the Kremlin also suggested creating joint early warning systems in Moscow and Brussels under a multilateral effort within the framework of the NATO-Russia Council (Litovkin, 2013: 172). Instead of placing the long-range interceptors in the vicinity of Russia, Putin proposed that the US could deploy short-range and medium-range interceptors in Turkey or Iraq or a sea-based system in the vicinity of Iran. If the US side would accept the Russian proposals, Russian officials maintained that there was no further need for Russian asymmetrical responses such as deploying Iskander missiles to the Kaliningrad region (Hildreth & Ek 2009: 20). In turn, the US side proposed the set up of a Two+Two Commission of US and Russian Ministers of Defence and Secretaries of State to discuss the issue and expressed its positive evaluation of Russia's cooperative efforts on the radar systems. Washington also became more

sympathetic to renewed nuclear disarmament actions and endorsed Russia's quest for a multilateralisation of the INF Treaty (Petrov 2007).

The US-Russian negotiations throughout 2007 and 2008 brought few gains. Russian General Buzhinsky, who was involved in US-Russian talks on BMD from the early 2000s onwards, maintains that the US-Russian negotiations can be classified as 'lose' (Buzhinsky, 2014, pers. comm.). Fundamental differences remained with regard to the approaches towards transparency measures and cooperation. The US aimed at solving outstanding issues on a case-by-case basis, whereas Russia sought to conclude a framework agreement with multiple sub-documents that would outline technological and potentially geographical limits for the US system, as Ivanov stressed (Ivanov 2014, pers. comm.).

In October 2007, Robert Gates and Condoleezza Rice proposed the stationing of Russian military personnel at the planned sites in Eastern Europe. Moreover, Gates suggested that the US could leave the Polish missile silos empty until Russia and the US had a common understanding of the threat stemming from long-range missiles and nuclear warheads (Rice, 2012: 677). The US side also indicated that it would negotiate limitations on Washington's missile deployments at the sites. In addition, US negotiators reviewed potential constraints on the operation and capabilities of the system to reduce possible threats to Moscow's own strategic deterrent (Roberts, 2008). Gates recalls that:

Putin seemed genuinely interested in these ideas and acknowledged that we had made some interesting proposals. [A]ll the Russian officials [...] seemed convinced that the United States was sincerely interested in cooperating with Russia, and we agreed that experts would meet to flesh out ideas (Gates, 2014, loc. 2919).

However, Gates' proposals met resistance among US bureaucrats and Eastern European allies. In addition, the White House called the deployment of the third site 'urgent', thereby defying Moscow's request for a detailed consultative process ('Gates causes missile defense flap', 2007). The subsequent changes in US moves first and foremost affected the idea of a permanent military presence for Russia at the sites in Poland and the Czech Republic (Gates, 2014: 2985). As Foreign Minister Lavrov maintained, '[w]e are [now] asked to agree to sporadic visits, provided the Czech and Polish authorities give their consent'. (Finn, 2007) Statements by the Russian Foreign Ministry also suggest that the US stepped back from Gates' earlier offers for the joint assessment of threats and the halting of full operability of the system unless an Iranian threat were imminent ('Russia dismisses US offers on missile defence: reports', 2007).

Regardless, fundamental Russian concerns such as the stationing of US military equipment in Eastern Europe remained unaddressed. Condoleezza Rice maintains that the Russian military thus remained opposed to US actions irrespective of US concessions in the field of transparency measures (Rice, 2012: 678). According to Sokov, the Russian military continued to insist that it would favour a ABM Treaty 'light', a legal codification of Washington's future missile defence policies (Sokov, 2014b, pers. comm.).

At the same time, US-Ukrainian negotiations on missile defence cooperation on Ukrainian radar facilities exacerbated the US-Russian confrontations. Putin warned Kiev that Moscow would aim its missiles at Ukraine if the 'fourth or fifth [US] BMD sites' were deployed (Petrov, 2008). As a reaction to the rapprochement between Washington and Kiev, Russia terminated a Ukrainian-Russian agreement to lease two early-warning and space-monitoring systems (Hammick, 2008).

However, at the US-Russian summit in April 2008, the US and Russia expressed 'their interest [in] creating a system responding to potential missile threats in which Russia and the United States and Europe will participate as equal partners.' (The White House, 2008) Both presidents also agreed to intensify the dialogue on issues concerning missile defence cooperation both bilaterally and multilaterally (Dorschner and Tudor, 2009).

US-Russian Relations, 2003-2008

Missile defence developments were indicative of the broader confrontational development surrounding bilateral relations throughout the mid-2000s. Geopolitical interests in the post-Soviet space continued to conflict with Moscow's opposition to NATO enlargement policies on Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan (Trenin, 2007: 101). Another area of contention related to the internal policies of Russia. Throughout the mid-2000s, the U.S. democracy agenda contradicted Russia's move towards economic and political re-centralization at home and *realpolitik* abroad (Aron, 2006).

The broader political and strategic antagonisms directly fed into doubts regarding the necessity for bilateral cooperation (Aron, 2006). Whilst Moscow initially hoped to re-define the long-term relationship with the US through a comprehensive anti-terror alliance (Mankoff, 2007), the Bush administration was less willing to go beyond limited requests for mutual ad-hoc cooperation on

anti-piracy measures, counter-narcotic training, and practical activities such as missile defence command post exercises and nuclear weapons accident responses (Rutland, 2002). Mutual interests such as non-proliferation policies as well as a perceived need to cooperate on Afghanistan and counter-terrorism remained unaffected by broader misgivings, but fell short of halting the general downturn in the relationship.

US Policy on Russia

According to Posen, by the beginning of the 2000s, Washington's foreign policy debate had narrowed to arguments 'between a nationalist, unilateralist version of hegemony, and a liberal, multilateral version of hegemony.' (Posen, 2003: 44) Under George W. Bush, the foreign policy strategy came to primarily rest on America's military power and included a more aggressive policy that aimed at full-spectrum dominance in the military sphere.

The 'hawk-nationalist alliance' that formed the centre of the Bush administration after 9/11 primarily focused on regional threats in the Middle East whilst powers such as Russia were not a central focus of US strategies. In fact, the administration's approach to global powers such as Russia was based on the desire to encourage great powers to follow the US lead because of America's unrivalled military powers (Jervis, 2003). As Bush put it, 'America has, and intends to keep, military strength beyond challenge – thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace.' (Bush, 2002) Bush emphasised that 'we have our best chance since the rise of the nation state in the 17th century to build a world where the great powers compete in peace instead of preparing for war.' (Bush, 2002)

Whereas the reasoning behind encouraging other great powers into following the US lead might have been based on the genuine desire for accommodation and rapprochement, the doctrine was potentially less flexible when it came to the necessity of seeking compromises on areas in which the interests of the US and Russia did not coincide. According to Rutland and Dubinsky, the Bush administration expected that Russia would accept its allegedly diminished global role (Rutland and Dubinsky, 2012: 249). Former national security advisor Brzezinski echoed widespread sentiments when he regarded the post-Cold War relationship as 'a process of accommodation to the new realities prevailing between [the US] and [Russia] and involving, also, Russia's new, different position in the world.' (Brzezinski in US Senate, 2007: 33) As such, for

Chandler, the US foreign policy agenda resembled a rejection of Cold War realist approaches that were guided by formal support for sovereign equality. (Chandler, 2006: 475–76) In addition to a potentially less compromising foreign policy stance, Washington's perception of itself as the 'indispensable' nation for global stability decreased the importance of Russia in the eyes of US officials (Mankoff, 2012b).

This did not mean that Washington refrained from closer cooperative efforts with Moscow, in particular with regard to Washington's counter-terrorist policies. Belkin stressed that Bush's initial criticism of Russia's Chechnya operation and Moscow's military ties to Iran gave way to the US's post-9/11 cooperation with Russia underlined by a pragmatic approach based on a sober analysis of Washington's external interests (Belkin, 2004). In the same vein, Stent argued that G.W. Bush's Russian policy was a return to the Kissinger-Nixon realism of 'limited partnership' in mutually beneficial areas such as counterterrorism (Stent, 2005). However, Washington's global foreign policy outlook meant the Bush administration tended to neglect Russian interests when US and Russian policy aims diverged. Legvold branded the Bush administration's approach as 'ambiguous indifference' characterised by an 'initial lack of interest in the relationship, readiness to act when and how it chose on a host of issues of concern to Russians, and later an inclination to take Russian cooperation for granted.' (Legvold, 2006: 160) Senator Joe Biden, whilst reiterating that the US 'must respond to Russia's actions that destabilize the country's neighbours or undermine the region's young democracies', noted that the US would turn to Russia 'when we need it only'. (Biden in US Senate, 2007: 2)

Moreover, throughout the second term of the Bush administration, Russia's domestic policy became a focus of Washington's criticism (The White House, 2006: 39). For Washington's leadership, the main contention was Russia's tendency to centralise power domestically and to allegedly deny post-Soviet states their path to a democratic future (Legvold, 2006: 157–159). Brzezinski characterised the Putin administration's conduct as a policy of unnaturally perpetuating the Soviet legacy (Brzezinski in US Senate, 2007: 34).

The US National Security Strategy of 2006 explicitly warned of Moscow's 'efforts to prevent democratic development at home and abroad [which would] hamper the development of Russia's relations with the United States, Europe, and its neighbours.' (The White House, 2006: 39) A document by the US Department of State and the US Agency for International Development contended that the 'fundamental character of regimes [mattered] as much as the

distribution of powers among them’ and stressed that the US would counter Russia’s ‘negative behaviour’ in several areas, from weapons sales to dubious regimes to the alleged pressure Moscow put on former Soviet republics. The strategy alleged that ‘elsewhere in Europe, people yearn for the hope kindled by the “color revolutions” of 2003 to 2005.’ (US Department of State and US Agency for International Development, 2007: 49, 48) Tsygankov therefore maintained that the second term of the Bush administration’s policy towards Russia was characterised by the desire for a ‘limited engagement with elements of rivalry, rather than cooperation.’ (Tsygankov, 2011: 35)

US Nuclear and BMD Policies

The focus on military dominance and ‘primacy’ was reflected in the Bush administration’s nuclear and ballistic missile defence policies. Officials in the Bush administration had initially criticised the Clinton administration’s Cold War nuclear deterrence approach as immoral and out-dated because of its adherence to assured destruction principles (Clark, 2000). Behind this line of argument stood a posture of Cold War hawks whose intention was not to decrease Washington’s reliance on nuclear deterrence, but to shape an ambitious strategy in which nuclear weapons could be utilised as active (although political) foreign policy tools to address ‘rogue states’ (Payne, 1998).

The nuclear posture of the US was shaped by a handful of nuclear experts who had previously supported strategies of nuclear escalation and dominance against the Soviet Union (Payne, 1996; Peoples, 2010: 181–190). In the study *Rationale and Requirements for U.S. Nuclear Forces and Arms Control* by the National Institute for Public Policy, Keith Payne et al. highlighted the need for a nuclear posture that would be able to ‘counter a significant number of nuclear weapons, particularly against a hostile China or Russia – or, worse yet, a Sino-Russian alliance.’ (Payne, 2001) The expert group explicitly stated that the US should try to gain the upper hand in the escalation ladder in future conflict scenarios. The report also suggested that Russia might chose to voluntarily move away from nuclear parity with the US by de-alerting its nuclear forces. The panel advocated for an abolition of arms control as this would relieve Russia from the pressure of preserving strategic parity (Payne, 2001: 14–15). The move away from the Cold War bilateral disarmament focus was meant to effectively ‘terminate expectations that bilateral verified nuclear arms control agreements between [Russia and the US] would move forward to more comprehensive and restrictive agreements’, as Simpson and Nielsen have argued (Simpson and Nielsen, 2005: 276).

The US nuclear posture of 2002 raised the potential spectre of military options in a potential nuclear conflict with Russia (McDonough, 2006d: 45). *National Security Presidential Directive 17* called for retaining an arsenal large enough to deter any other country from challenging US pre-eminence (Norris and Kristensen, 2004). As Bohlen highlighted, there was no explanation for the preservation of 2,200 warheads except in relation to Russia's nuclear arsenal (Bohlen 2003: 31). A controversial article by two US scholars in *International Security* maintained that the US would 'stand on the verge of attaining nuclear primacy vis-à-vis plausible great power adversaries'. (Lieber and Press, 2006: 7) Arbatov from the Moscow Carnegie Center stressed that the 'strategic balance between the United States and Russia is becoming less stable and that this development might indeed lead to an increased crisis potential' (Arbatov, 2006). McDonough highlighted that the US strategy translated into 'denial and escalation-dominance capabilities for use against more formidable potential peer-competitors such as Russia and China.' (McDonough, 2006b: 63) Jervis alleged that the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review implied America's hegemonic move towards the dissuasion of potential competitors in ways that placed the US 'beyond challenge.' (Jervis, 2003: 376)

Ballistic missile defence was part of a nuclear triad that simultaneously envisioned the build-up of conventional long-range strike options and an unparalleled ('second-to-none') nuclear weapons arsenal (McDonough, 2006d). Washington's plans included various systems to intercept missiles in any flight phase (Youngs and Taylor, 2003). However, technological difficulties and domestic opposition partly curtailed the ambitious plans of the Bush administration. From the mid-2000s onwards, the power shift towards the executive branch in the wake of the 9/11 incident had reversed and the Democratic majority in Congress re-asserted its influence in decisions on missile defence. Critics of the administration's missile defence policy denounced the 'ideological' withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and argued that the technological constraints to BMD meant that a confrontation with Russia was not necessary. As one Democratic Congressman highlighted:

Instead of talking to the Russians about the problems in Tehran, we are involved in a tit-for-tat exchange with the Russians over a missile defense program that may never work (cited in Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 2007: 9).

The General Accounting Office (GAO) criticised the 'unrealistic cost and schedule estimates' as well as 'the immature technologies' of the system (U.S. Government Accountability Office,

2006). The Bush administration's approach was criticised for circumventing a debate with America's long-standing allies in Europe. Brad Sherman, chair of the Congressional Subcommittee on Terrorism, Non-Proliferation, and Trade, reiterated that:

Not only does the administration want to deploy a system that does not work, but it is willing to do so at the expense of [...] our NATO allies and a host of issues far more important to our defense (Sherman cited in Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 2007: 7).

Moreover, a number of Democrats argued that a common US-Russian approach towards Iran's nuclear programme would be harmed by the reluctance to compromise on the third site with Russia and argued in favour of extending the START I Treaty verification measures towards a new, legally binding regime (US Senate, 2007: 3). In May 2007, the Senate Arms Services Committee cut \$85 million from the \$310.4 million that Bush requested to fund European missile defence deployment in Poland and the Czech Republic. The House and Senate Committees asked for a study of alternative systems (Hildreth and Ek, 2009: 8). Former policymakers and analysts echoed the criticism of Congressional Democrats (Brzesinski in US Senate, 2007: 45). Various commentators reasoned that the US might gain from cooperating with Russia on nuclear issues in order to increase US-Russian solidarity on policies towards Tehran (Scowcroft cited in US Senate, 2007: 46).

Bush officials argued that US-Russian cooperation on Iran would remain unaffected by BMD (Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 2007: 5). As Royce argued, 'it is unlikely that Russia would meaningfully compromise a deepening relationship with Iran over what its leadership surely understands is our relatively minor and unthreatening defensive deployment.' (Royce in Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 2007: 5). The Bush administration sought to move forward with its third site plans despite domestic criticism, ally scepticism, Russian opposition, US intelligence estimates that Iran had terminated its nuclear weapons programme, and technological issues with GBI technology (Futter, 2011: 192).

Russian Foreign Policy

Russia's reaction to US BMD policies has to be assessed against backdrop of broader misgivings. As one Russian interviewee argued, 'the ABM Treaty abrogation as such would have mattered little if it was not for the general predisposition of the Bush administration to deny Russia conventional arms limitations in Europe and to overhaul the international order.' (Ivanov, 2014,

pers. comm.) Foreign Minister Lavrov regarded the third site as part of a broader ‘containment strategy’ of Russia that was also reflected in Washington’s desire to enlarge NATO into the territory of the former Soviet Union, Washington’s democracy promotion, and the Bush administration’s approach towards the CFE Treaty (Lavrov, 2007b).

In the aftermath of the rapprochement in 2002, the Russian leadership became disillusioned by what it perceived as an American neglect for Russia’s security interests. Whilst anti-terrorism cooperation efforts had served as a major frame of reference for Russia’s domestic and foreign policies in the early 2000s, this approach gave way to an increasingly hostile interpretation of US foreign policy (Snetkov, 2012: 531). Washington’s renewed criticism regarding Moscow’s conduct in Chechnya was seen as a ‘betrayal’ of the common anti-terror cause (Azizian, 2003). The stumbling economic integration into the US-led order was partly blamed on Washington’s ambivalent policies towards Russia (Aron, 2006). The US condemnation of the ‘axis of evil’ was regarded as a cynical attempt to foster US interests. Washington’s support for the Georgian military was interpreted as anti-Russian in nature (Tsygankov, 2013: 148). The ‘coloured revolutions’ in post-Soviet states, particularly in Georgia and Ukraine, were regarded as a direct threat to Russia’s domestic stability (March, 2012). The enhanced attempt to foster a high-level consensus that stressed the country’s historical achievements and defined Russia’s identity as originating from its own values reflected a deeply seated fear of ‘Western’ democracy-promotion and increased the contempt of Russia’s elite towards the US (Monaghan, 2008: 727).

According to Snetkov, the Russian perception was that it had managed its domestic issues, such as terrorism, but that the ‘West’ refused to give Russia’s its rightful place amongst other great powers (Snetkov, 2012: 530). This narrative, as Sakwa highlighted, spilled over into ‘an exaggerated fear that any concession will be interpreted by the West as capitulative’ (Sakwa, 2008: 250). As a result, according to Shearman, questions of prestige, status, and identity were mixed with geostrategic preoccupations regarding US policies such as the quest for further NATO expansion and missile defence (Shearman, 2001: 256).

Mankoff stresses that Russia’s more assertive stance towards the US first and foremost grew out of the recognition that the bandwagoning approach of Putin’s first term had not led to reciprocal deference to Moscow’s interests (Mankoff, 2012b: 111). The shift from ‘critical comment [...] to unilateral action’ (Monaghan, 2008: 720) was based on a perceived change in the international balance of power in which US power was seen as waning (Tsygankov, 2009:

349). At the same time, Russia's economic surge meant that Moscow could base its quest for a 'great power' image on a more solid footing (Stent, 2008: 1093).

Nevertheless, Macfarlane argued that Moscow's 'great power pragmatism' remained unchanged and primarily based on the willingness to recover economically (Macfarlane, 2006: 47–49). Trenin identified Russia's economic expansionism as the major cause for more assertive policies (Trenin, 2007). Foreign Minister Lavrov maintained that Russia only 'wants to engage in trade [...] We intend to continue integrating into the global economy on generally accepted terms, while adapting our legislation accordingly.' (Lavrov, 2007b) Military and economic cooperation with the US remained attractive for Russian foreign policy makers (Cross, 2006). Official documents from the Russian Foreign Ministry underlined the continuing importance of US-Russian ties and simply requested more 'honesty' in the bilateral relationship (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007).

Russia's foreign policy did not necessarily represent a decision to cut ties with Europe and the US, but to base Russia's global outreach on a more multilateral footing that sought ties with the 'West' and other emerging powers such as China. Foreign Minister Lavrov maintained that Russia's policy symbolised a 'pragmatic, multivector development, together with the firm but non-confrontational upholding of national interests in foreign affairs.' (Lavrov, 2007c) According to Lukyanov, Putin considered international relations a struggle for influence and prestige and continuously reiterated that stability comes from a 'balance of power'. However, realism would mean understanding the limits of what is acceptable and each party measuring its strength against its wishes (Lukyanov, 2014). Yet, as Sakwa stressed, Putin's 'realism' was one that remained 'concerned not so much with balancing as with joining'. (Sakwa, 2008: 245)

The results of Russian deliberations were not without contradictions. For Shevtsova, Russia's foreign policy aims verged between interacting with the 'world' on its own terms, whilst at the same time longing for a 'privileged place in a US-European-Russian triumvirate'. According to her, 'there [was] no choice for a state that has firmly decided not to chose sides.' (Shevtsova, 2007: 902) As a result, according to Aron, Russia's foreign policy entailed an ad-hoc and flexible character in which long-term results were less important than the nation's 'role today and the dividends it yields now.' (Aron, 2006)

Traces of Russia's broader foreign policy considerations are detectable in Moscow's approaches to US missile defence policies. Civilian leaders based their rejection to the third site in Eastern Europe on the encroachment on Russia in the European security space. As Foreign Minister Lavrov asserted:

It is hardly coincidental that a missile defense base in Europe will fit into the U.S. global missile defense system, being deployed along the perimeter of Russian [...] borders, like a jigsaw piece falling into place (Lavrov, 2007b).

In Russian official statements, military considerations surrounding the third site were only marginally referred to (Lavrov, 2007a). Instead it was argued that missile defence would necessitate an increase in the presence of NATO navy, air defence and land forces in the future, which would pose a threat to Russia, undermining the tacit agreements of the 1990s (Lilly, 2014b, loc. 4591). The third site would therefore represent a codification of 'bloc approaches', as Foreign Minister Lavrov maintained (Lavrov, 2007b). In this reading, the third site stood for a rejection of Russian influence in Eastern Europe with serious implications for Russian influences on European policymaking (Barabanov, 2007: 3). As Friedman argued, the third site threatened to limit Russian options to 'exercise caution regarding the expansion of NATO into territories closer to Russia, in particular Ukraine and Georgia.' (Friedman, 2007) According to Barabanov, Russian officials feared that the installation of military infrastructure would encourage Washington's Eastern European allies to pursue explicitly anti-Russian policies (Barabanov, 2007: 3).

The Russian military based its threat assessments on an extensive list of criticisms that related to the potential evolution of US long-range conventional strike weapons, nuclear weapons superiority and space dominance (Lilly, 2014b, loc. 4591). General Ivashov maintained that 'Washington is doing everything to devalue Russia's missile potential. Everything undertaken by the White House in missile defence deployment ... is directed against Russia'. (Cited in Kassinova 2005: 674). Russia's military argued that US missile defence bases in Eastern Europe could be used as an offensive strike weapon, which was in turn perceived to be a breach of the NATO-Russia Founding Act that had emphasised the non-deployment of nuclear infrastructure on the territory of former Warsaw Pact states (Arbatov et al. 2010a: 14). Tsypkin argued that the

Russian general staff's threat assessment was 'sharply skewed to support the military agenda' and was less concerned about the intricate details of US BMD (Tsypkin, 2009: 789).

The role of the Russian military in formulating missile defence responses remained pivotal for two reasons. First, because of the technological sophistication of missile defence-related developments, the civilian leadership had to rely on military nuclear experts for its threat assessments. As a result, according to Podvig, there was no serious technical discussion of these issues among civilian leaders that would have 'calmed Russian perceptions about US missile defence and its implications for the nuclear balance.' (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.) According to Tsypkin, civilian leaders remained largely incomprehensible of questions of nuclear security (Tsypkin, 2009: 785).

Second, in light of controversial domestic military reforms throughout the mid-2000s, the civilian leadership remained careful to not antagonise the general staff. Increasing frictions between the Ministry of Defence under the newly elected Minister Anatoly Serdyukov and the military over military reform processes suggests that Putin might not have been willing to focus on yet another area of confrontation, as Lilly stressed (Lilly, 2014b, loc. 4937). In fact, Putin's attempts to reform the Russian military had previously spilled over into attacks on the Kremlin's decision to de-emphasize Russia's strategic nuclear forces (Belkin, 2003: 1). According to Trenin, the caution towards the military constituency not only limited the freedom of manoeuvrability for the Kremlin's foreign policy conduct; it also fed into a more inflexible stance towards the US (Trenin 2005: 289).

At the same time, the Russian threat assessments themselves combined military arguments with the politicised nature of Moscow's domestic debates. For instance, the evaluation of the military impact of the third site was a 'rational' security concern for the military, but hostility to the termination of the ABM Treaty was equally dominant in supporting Russian threat assessments (Kassianova, 2005b: 665). At times, missile defence and NATO enlargement policies were seen as sides of the same coin. Major General Zolotarev argued that Washington's argument concerning the non-threatening nature of the third site had 'analogies with NATO's arguments for its enlargement'. (Zolotarev 2008: 72) Russian officials combined missile defence with NATO enlargement policies, the alleged US failure to support the CFE Treaty and Washington's geostrategic competition over spheres of influence in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (Lavrov, 2007b). According to Arbatov, the increasing importance of the principle of

mutually assured destruction was based on Russia's own strategic and conventional weapons degradation and US nuclear postures, but it was simultaneously tied to what was perceived to be the arbitrary use of force by the US in Iraq and Kosovo (Arbatov et al. 2010b: 27).

Apart from a firmly established mind set among the Russian bureaucracy, numerous other factors influenced Russian perceptions of and responses to the third site. Tsypkin argues that for the Putin administration, the notion of nuclear deterrence had developed into a major foreign policy tool to signal its dissatisfaction with US policies and to underline Russia's great power status. Anything that threatened to undermine the credibility of Russia's nuclear power status was thus seen as an attack on Russia's foreign policy principles (Tsypkin, 2009: 784). In fact, Russian officials continuously used Russia's nuclear arsenal as a symbol of Russia's great power status. As Putin maintained:

Russia and the United States are the biggest nuclear powers. Our economy might be smaller, but Russia's nuclear potential is still comparable to that of the United States . . . Russia is a great nuclear power. No one disputes or doubts this (Putin 2003).

Moreover, Shevtsova argued that the civilian leadership used missile defence in the run up to the Russian election cycle in 2007 and 2008 so as to foster support for the political leadership through creating a 'siege mentality' (Shevtsova, 2007: 890). However, other observers have argued that BMD did not play a large role in the election campaigns of 2007 and 2008 (Topychkanov, 2014, pers. comm.). The popular support for Putin suggests that there was little need to draw additional attention to the Western encirclement of Russia (Kunze and Bohnet, 2008: 59). Lilly has shown that the employment of 'encirclement narratives' did not solely stem from the civilian leadership, but were consistently nurtured from all sites outside the Kremlin (Lilly, 2014b, loc. 4721).

Instead, Putin might have been forced to criticise the BMD issues in order to avoid domestic confrontations. Given the high sensitivity on nuclear issues among the wider Russian public, Tsypkin argued, 'the issue of American deployments, if left without a proper spin by the Kremlin could introduce an unpredictable [...] element into the tense, complicated and turbulent politics of Putin's succession and post-succession'. (Tsypkin, 2009: 785) Various arms manufacturers as well as the liberal political opposition criticised the Putin administration for allegedly doing too little to stop the attrition of Russia's strategic forces (Lilly, 2014b, loc. 4690; Tsypkin, 2009: 785).

Moreover, Russia's security elite fostered a more assertive dialogue that maintained that Russia had gained nothing from 'Gorbachevian capitulationism' in the past (Sakwa, 2008b: 281). As was the case in the broader security discourse, missile defence was regarded as one area in which Russia had previously made great concessions without reaping any benefits (Arbatova, 2014, pers. comm.). Moreover, according to Podvig, neither the Ministry of Defence nor the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had a stake in resolving the issue through cooperative missile defence efforts with the US (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.). Instead, missile defence offered a way to sustain the unity of the Russian elite (Tsygankov, 2010: 195).

Lastly, missile defence became highly personalised, as Putin grew increasingly hostile to US policies. According to Tsypkin, Putin's personal disappointment was based on the feeling that the US pursued an assertive diplomatic style that borders on 'humiliating Russia' (Tsypkin, 2009: 787). According to Arbatova, Washington's BMD policies in Eastern Europe reinforced Putin's perception of having fallen short of placing Russia on parity with the US (Arbatova, 2014, pers. comm.). When the US and Russia returned to nuclear arms control negotiations, Putin's criticism of BMD did indeed significantly decrease.

Interpreting Ballistic Missile Defence Diplomacy

With Moscow's and Washington's foreign policy aims and domestic variables on nuclear and missile defence policies in mind, the following section seeks to interpret US and Russian diplomatic efforts in the area of missile defence.

Russia

Based on the above findings on domestic pressures and foreign policy priorities, it is likely that the Putin administration pursued multiple aims at the same time. Firstly, statements by Russian officials suggest that Moscow was not generally opposed to finding a compromise with the US on missile defence as long as Washington would take central Russian demands into consideration. At the same time, however, in contrast to the early 2000s, a more compromising Russian outlook was constrained by a general desire to not give in to US demands. Secondly, Russia sought to deflect attention on the swift build-up of US military installations in Eastern Europe through alternative cooperation plans and attempts to increase the diplomatic costs for US missile defence policies. In addition, Russian responses to US missile defence policies suggest that Moscow's policies were intended to avoid a long-term strategic rapprochement with

Washington. Lastly, Russia sought to separate missile defence and nuclear weapons issues from the broader relationship because of its on-going interest in economic cooperation with the US. Russia's missile defence policies remained at times very flexible, suggesting that nuclear-related issues were not at the core of Russian concerns.

The key feature of Russia's cooperation proposal at the G8 Summit was likely the attempt to counter Washington's swift build-up of missile defence systems in Europe and followed the desire to elevate Russia into a better negotiating position in terms of missile defence systems in Europe ('Putin's new ABM offer feasible if US drops missile plans for Europe', 2007). Moreover, Putin might also have speculated that Russian actions could increase the pressure on the Bush administration to find a more compromising stance with Russia. Tsygankov suspects that 'Putin's proposal [had] a chance to get some European support and generate a new wide ranging debate within the U.S. political establishment, where the concept of world hegemony and unilateralism has been seriously disputed for quite some time.' (Tsygankov in Frolov et al. 2007) There appeared to be little risk to depicting the much-criticised Bush administration as being inflexible and aggressive. The cooperation effort could also have served as a test for US policies on Russia as the US would either cooperate to achieve a desirable solution to problems or would have to admit that the problem is rooted in the biased attitude towards Russia (Monaghan, 2008: 718).

It is at the same time possible that the June 2007 cooperative actions were first and foremost designed as a 'door opener' for a more comprehensive US-Russian dialogue on strategic stability (Topychkanov, 2014, pers. comm.). Lavrov stressed that:

The way to trust lies through candid dialog and well-reasoned discussions, as well as through interaction that provides for the joint analysis of threats. It is this latter opportunity that Russia is denied for no particular reason. Actually, the West demands from Russia implicit faith in its partners' analytical abilities and good intentions. But in matters involving national security, demanding such things cannot be taken seriously, to say the least (Lavrov 2007a).

However, by remaining firm on a multitude of prerequisites that needed to be met before Russia would engage in serious cooperation efforts, Moscow's missile defence demands were unlikely to be realistically endorsed by the US. As Khramichkhin has shown, it was highly unlikely that the US would have abolished its Ground Based Interceptor (GBI) plans in Eastern Europe in exchange for Russia's proposal to cooperation on radar sites in Russia, not least because the

Russian radar sites remained incompatible with the US system. In addition, Moscow's proposals did not include interceptor sites that the US regarded as pivotal to the system. Russia's actions thus remained by and large 'impractical' (Khramichkhin, 2007).

Because Moscow feared that the US would interpret a more cooperative stance as a tacit approval, the Russian side also imposed various prerequisites for a more cooperative stance on missile defence. First, the US and Russia should declare that the BMD systems on both sides would not be directed against each other. Second, there should be an attempt to pursue cooperation with 'full transparency'. Third, both parties should agree that outer space should remain demilitarised. Moreover, Russian officials argued that a bilateral cooperation must take the security interests of third states into consideration (Selinger, 2004). Putin maintained that progress on an inclusive missile defence cooperation approach was only possible once all sides had agreed to the existence of a real threat and that pivotal decisions surrounding the system would need to be made multilaterally (Putin, 2007a). According to Kozin, Russia might have also remained reluctant to entering into a more cooperative relationship on BMD as long as China could potentially be targeted by the system (Kozin, 2014, pers. comm.). An additional fact that contradicts the notion that Russia was interested in a genuine attempt to enter cooperation on missile defence was that Russia was itself sceptical about the advantages of ballistic missile defence. In 2004, Putin had categorised missile defence cooperation as a second-tier issue in US-Russian relations saying that: 'we think the time has not come to invest big money in such a project yet. We do not have this money to spare.' (Putin & Bush, 2004) General scepticism on facilitating missile defence cooperation could also have rested on the lack of domestic interest groups that would have pushed for more cooperative actions. A leaked cable from the US State Department reported that Russian negotiators assessed that:

The US missile defence system creates a feeling of decreased security in Russia, and Moscow will not cooperate with the U.S. on any system that could be used to potentially decrease Russian security. [The Russian negotiator] Kislyak responded coolly to the idea of joint regional missile defense architecture. He said Russia did not agree with the U.S. threat assessment and that such discussions among experts could only be conducted once the U.S. suspended negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic. [US negotiator] Rood pressed [Russian negotiator] Kislyak on whether Russia would be open to such collaboration [...] if its threat assessments grew closer or equalled the U.S. assessment in the future. Kilyak demurred, saying that there were many ways to meet such threats in the future ('A/S Rood Missile Defense Talks with Russia in France', 2007).

Russia's response to US missile defence policies also needs to be interpreted as an effort to revive nuclear bilateral arms control by pressurising America into concession towards Moscow.

As Lavrov stressed, 'the door for positive joint actions to ensure common interests on the basis of equality will always remain open'. (Lavrov 2007a)

The outcome of the above deliberations was that the actual bar for entering joint BMD projects had been raised to such a high level that the actual probability of cooperative efforts remained unlikely. As argued before, multiple factors such as domestic pressures, the desire to induce the US into direct negotiations on missile defence, and Washington's unwillingness to significantly meet Russian demands might have been key to Russian actions. At the same, given the vast number of prerequisites to be met once the Russian side would consent to US missile defence policies, it is possible that Moscow did arguably seek to avoid a long-term strategic agreement with Washington on missile defences. As has been argued above, by the mid-2000s, Russian policymakers were conscious of the shifting global power constellations and regarded a flexible multi-vector foreign policy as more suitable to Russian interests. A long-term commitment to military-to-military cooperation with the US might have undermined Russia's broader foreign policy outlook.

Likewise, in the field of transparency measures, Moscow's demands remained detached from realistic options. As the leader of the Russian delegation, General Buzhinsky, highlighted, 'our goal was not to have another ABM Treaty, but we tried to impose some future limits on the speed of US interceptors.' (Buzhinsky 2014, pers. comm.) Given the ambitious space policies of the Bush administration, the unilateral preference among US officials, and the obstacles for a multilateral missile defence system even within the NATO alliance, these conditions were unlikely to be agreed to by Washington (DeBlois et al., 2004). However, at the same time, the Russian support of Gates' more compromising tone on missile defence policies (that were later curtailed by the US administration) show that Russian civilians were prone to compromises with the US. Missile defence policies might thus have reflected Russia's overall foreign policy outlook that ranged between the willingness to preserve both Moscow's foreign policy autonomy and cooperative efforts towards the US. As Omelicheva argued, Moscow's policy followed a 'pragmatic third way' that sought to avoid confrontation with the West and to retain Moscow's 'strategic independence' to pursue pragmatic solutions on a 'case-by-case basis in light of Russia[s] immediate interests and context'. (Omelicheva, 2012: 2012) This policy conduct was reflected in Russia's ad-hoc changes from broad opposition to benign cooperation actions and the quest for a strategic dialogue with the US. Despite the vehement criticism among the civilian leadership, Moscow's overall approach on missile defence remained flexible as long as

Washington would be willing to join discussions on renewed arms control frameworks (Lavrov, 2007a).

At the same time, it is possible that Russia's missile defence policies were less coherent than alleged by commentators and analysts. Whereas Russian President Putin was broadly satisfied with US transparency proposals in October 2007, Defence Minister Anatoly Serdyukov maintained that 'all that has been proposed to us does not satisfy us.' ('Russia rejects New US Offer', 2007) Pifer from the Brookings Institution, who was the American note taker at a meeting between Colin Powell, Donald Rumsfeld, Sergey Ivanov, Minister of Defence, and Igor Ivanov, then Foreign Minister of Russia, noted that the Russian Defence Minister and Foreign Minister did not appear to be comfortable taking part in that format (Pifer, 2014, pers. comm.). According to Sokov, high-ranking individuals in the Russian administration were at times able to block more ambitious cooperative efforts (Sokov 2014, pers. comm.).

At the same time, Moscow's policy also remained based on the desire to negotiate with the US in order to support a stable working relationship based on Russia's willingness to pursue closer economic cooperation (Lavrov, 2007b). Russian officials were supportive of a separation of nuclear-related issues from the broader relationship. As Lavrov maintained, the 'strategic challenge [of US missile defence] will be met at the strategic level.' (Lavrov, 2007b) Putin's caution in terms of the modernisation of Russia's nuclear forces and the focus on Russian economic development in the broader foreign policy formulation suggest the more nuanced role of the Kremlin, aiming at preserving a *realpolitik* approach whilst also giving in to domestic pressures. Russia's missile defence diplomacy also continuously reiterated calls for the US to take Russian interests into consideration, suggesting that Moscow believed the relationship could be fixed if Washington was willing to compromise with Russia.

Putin's verbal agility and the speed with which he abandoned one position (military counter-measures) and adopted its opposite (cooperation) might suggest that the Russian president was less concerned about the military or strategic issues related to nuclear weapons and deterrence than about trying to persuade the United States that Russia would be a valuable partner. As Lavrov maintained, 'if an equal partnership prevails in U.S.-Russian relations, both countries will be able to achieve almost anything'. (Lavrov, 2007b) This interpretation is supported by Russia's willingness to undermine Iran-Russian relations in favour of missile defence cooperation despite the fact that Russia did not regard Tehran as an immediate proliferation danger. In fact, as a

reaction to Russia's Gabala offer, Iran's parliament spokesman, Kazem Jalali, maintained that Iran should not be a 'tool' for settling disputes between world powers ('Iran's Parliament warns against Russian Missile-Shield Proposal', 2007).

It could thus be argued that Russia's at times aggressive opposition to the third site appears to not have been an end in itself, but a means to a more cooperative transatlantic relationship that would include Moscow's interests. If the US entered negotiations, both states could 'find a way out of the current situation while taking into account the sentiments of all parties involved', as Lavrov stressed (Lavrov 2007a). In fact, whereas Russia initially sought to find alternatives to the third site, the civilian leadership was content with the initial proposals on enhanced transparency measures in Poland and the Czech Republic, whilst continuing the quest for a new legally binding arms control treaty as a means to establish parity with the US (Mathers, 2012: 509).

USA

In the US, the third site was primarily seen as an element of a strategy to generate a viable policy against Iran's potential development of a nuclear weapon and long-range missiles. For US officials, it also represented an alternative to a possible first-strike scenario on Iran. US officials reasoned that the third site would be able to demonstrate to Iran that investment in nuclear payloads and ballistic missile modernisation would be futile, as a mutual deterrence relationship with the United States cannot be achieved (Bell, 2007).

Multiple factors speak against the Russian allegation that the third site was militarily directed against Moscow. The nuclear and missile defence postures as well as the move from non-proliferation to counter-proliferation strategies were an outcome of a decade-long strategic narrative that aimed at replacing the US-Soviet adversarial relationship with a new strategic outlook that focused on 'rogue states' (Walton, 2010). Official narratives of the Bush administration saw 'rogue states', and in particular Iran, as the greatest immediate danger to the US and its allies (Homolar, 2011). Futter thus maintains that Bush's BMD policies were 'a product of the administration's decision to pay more attention to rogue state threats, rather than to great power politics with nations like Russia.' (Futter, 2011: 192) In strategic deliberations among (neo-) conservatives throughout the 1990s, the pivotal force behind the initiation of a more robust missile defence programme throughout the early 2000s was China, whereas Russia played only a minor role (Kagan et al., 2000: 4). Likewise, the broader military programmes such

as the weaponisation of space first and foremost concerned US-Sino relations, whereas Russia was not regarded as being a peer or competitor (Johnson-Freese, 2004; Liao, 2005).

According to Brad Roberts, who would later serve as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Nuclear and Missile Defence Policies in the Obama administration, there were also sound technological arguments in favour of the chosen location in US plans to protect itself from an Iranian long-range strike (Roberts, 2014, pers. comm.). Various officials contended that Poland would be the best place to intercept missiles from the Middle East heading towards the United States (Fried, 2007a). Whilst such allegations could be interpreted as arbitrary absent insights into US deliberations, it is probable that Russia did not stand in the focus of military considerations among US policymakers. Had Russia's nuclear deterrent been the central factor of US planning, missile defence deployments could potentially have been more effective on the territory of the United States (Wilkening, 2012). The missile defence system that emerged throughout the 1990s and early 2000s was meant to guarantee US freedom of action in various regional theatres and to underline the quest for global hegemony, but it fell far short of the Reaganite plans to protect the US from large-scale attacks from the Soviet Union.

Instead of deliberately undermining Russia's interests, the US-Russian dispute over missile defence could have been based on US ignoring of Russia. As Eric Edelman, US Undersecretary of Defence for Policy, remarked, Bush did not really think that 'Russia was a problem' in the field of BMD (cited in Futter, 2011: 156). Moreover, there was a sense among US diplomats that Russia would eventually consent to US plans as it had done in the early 1990s and early 2000s (US diplomat (b), 2014, pers. comm.). In fact, as Mendelsohn maintained, 'rifts have been predicted over other U.S. actions [on missile defence] in the past decade [...] but have failed to materialize, perhaps because effective policy alternatives for Moscow continue to be limited.' (Mendelsohn, 2007) The argument of 'neglecting Russia' is also supported by various other characteristics of the Bush administration's more general approach towards Russia. In addition, cooperation on the basis of a US-Russian understanding on strategic issues ceased to affect US policies after ABM Treaty termination, whilst Russia's potential asymmetric response to US military developments was regarded as insignificant in light of Russia's economic and military weaknesses (Podvig, 2007b).

However, Moscow's assertion that the Bush administration had the containment of Russia in mind suggests that the global missile defence system came from a hegemonic concept of

pacifying both 'rogue states' as well as potential peer competitors. As argued above, in the military-security related realm, leading nuclear policymakers such as Keith Payne openly advanced ideas of nuclear dominance over Russia, thereby following the broader 'dissuasion' strategy of appeasing great powers on the premise of Washington's overwhelming military dominance. Moreover, the stationing of missile defences might have been in line with US policies to extend NATO infrastructure into former Soviet dominated territory.

Whilst 'rogue states' stood in the centre of US policies after 2001, Washington's initial outreach to Eastern European states in the area of missile defence started prior to 9/11, a time in which China and Russia were considered to be central competitors among the Bush administration's officials. As much as the enlargement of NATO was not solely about the promotion of democracy, but about concrete geostrategic aims (Gaddis, 1998; Brzezinski, 1997; Kristol, 1997), the deployment at the third site could have aimed at consolidating US presence and US commitment to Eastern Europe. As Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Daniel Fried highlighted, 'basing missile defence assets [in Eastern Europe] deepens our strategic relationship with Poland and the Czech Republic.' (Fried cited in Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 2007: 11) Fried also reiterated that the third site must increase the 'net security' for Warsaw and Prague. Secretary of State Rice maintained that the stationing at the third site would not only help to protect the US and Europe from long-range missiles from Iran, but that it would also 'deepen our defense cooperation [...] And it says strongly to the world what we already know, that Poland is one of America's greatest friends and allies. As members of NATO, we also will be able to contribute great – more greatly to the efforts of NATO to improve its capability.' (Rice, 2008)

Friedman therefore stressed that the third site was 'merely a lever to deal with the larger geopolitical issues [and] US military presence [...] in Poland.' (Friedman, 2007) The deployment of the third site can be regarded as an encouragement of Poland's policies surrounding democracy promotion in the Balkans, Ukraine, Georgia and Belarus, which were aiming at depriving Russia of a more influential role in its neighbourhood (Pocock and Smits, 2005). Establishing a security-related leadership in states of the former Warsaw Pact has been at the core of Washington's grand strategy after the Cold War. Moreover, as has been shown above, the US administration remained willing to accelerate the speed with which the third site was to be used in Eastern Europe despite intelligence estimates that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons programme in 2003 (Mazzetti, 2007). As such, it is not only highly unlikely that US policymakers

simply neglected the ‘Russia factor’ when discussing missile defence plans with Polish and Czech officials, there were also factors that guided Washington’s decision making other than the immediate or medium-term threat from Iran.

Another factor that suggests that the third site had an anti-Russian character was the fact that hawks such as Robert Joseph, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld along with Cold War nuclear hawks were steering US policies. In the Bush administration, multiple supporters of a Reaganite ‘peace-through-strength’ policy towards Russia were hostile to any unnecessary concessions to the former adversary. Lieven pointed out that the office of Vice President Dick Cheney continued to pursue Cold War-like assertiveness towards Russia that often resembled ‘moral autism’ and ‘national conformism’. (Lieven, 2006) Despite the initial decrease in the significance and the focus on the democratisation of Russia, some US officials saw Moscow’s policy conduct through Cold War lenses (Lynch, 2011: 105; Coates, 2012: 296). Blank stressed that there were officials in the administration who wanted to ‘strategically and politically use the BMD system against Russia by stationing interceptors in Eastern Europe.’ (Blank, 2014, pers. comm.) Whilst making no such statement throughout his time as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director of Proliferation strategy, counterproliferation and homeland defense at the National Security Council, Robert Joseph’s public statements in the wake of the 2014 Ukrainian crisis support the interpretation that the GBI system had also been anti-Russian in purpose (‘Responding to Russia’, 2014). Because ‘missile threats to Europe are not just coming from Iran [but also from Russia]’, Joseph suggested:

Europe has to respond to Moscow’s threats to US BMD installations by increasing the numbers of missile defence systems [...] BMD installations could hurt Moscow more than economic sanctions. Moreover, cooperation on missile defence with Ukraine could play an important role as part of a long-term strategy [...] Diplomacy is not a substitute for military preparedness (‘Responding to Russia’, 2014)

It might also have been the case that the third site only developed into a symbolic anti-Russian project with the increasing Russian opposition to US plans. Fitzpatrick suggests that Bush’s Third Site only turned into a ‘symbol of strength against Russia’ in 2007 after the downturn in diplomatic relations. Eastern European countries and the Bush administration saw the Third Site as a guard against Russian intimidation. And because Russia’s objections were perceived as intimidation by the US and some of its allies, Fitzpatrick suggests, ‘the Bush team insisted that it had to go ahead, all the more so because of Moscow’s fierce opposition.’ (Fitzpatrick, 2009: 8) The Bush administration was unwilling to give in to what it characterised as Russian

intransigence, which was seen as a show of ‘Russia’s ambitions to diminish United States’ clout.’ (Royce cited in Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 2007: 4)

From the above, one can infer that the third site served multiple purposes at the same time. Like Washington’s nuclear doctrine and the ambiguous strands in Washington’s policy on Russia, the third site was not an essentially anti-Russian project. Militarily, the third site followed the scripts of the conservative strategists on the expansion of zones of influence that were required in the deterrence of regional adversaries like Iran. But the hegemonic ambitions of the Bush administration in great power relations and the anti-Russian edge of US officials suggest that the administration reasoned that it could pursue secondary long-term aims that would entrench America’s geopolitical gains and possibly serve as a long-term deterrent against a resurgent Russia. The major utility of the third site might not have been based on purely military consideration, but as a political symbol for US ambitions in Eastern Europe and a deterrent to potential Russian aggression. In particular after the findings of the US National Intelligence Estimates that Iran had abolished its nuclear weapons programme, the Bush administration could have chosen to halt the expansion of the third site into Europe or by significantly reducing the deployment. However, the fact that the administration accelerated its efforts to position the third site in Europe might suggest that the US was willing to ingrain its role as a security provider in Eastern Europe irrespective of Russian concerns. The result was an ambivalent US policy that did not primarily and explicitly challenge Russia, but that deprived Moscow of certainty regarding the future direction of US postures and policies.

With regard to missile defence cooperation, Washington’s position remained ambivalent. It endorsed an inclusive approach with Russia to help defuse Russian criticism, but remained reluctant to grant Russia a central role in the US project. Whereas the US side explored Russia’s proposal of missile defence cooperation, the US administration never regarded Moscow’s proposal as a viable alternative to the third site. Serious considerations of Russia’s proposals would have contradicted both the ‘sense of American unipolar prerogatives’ to handle the proliferation agenda in the context of a military counter-proliferation framework and the expansive character of US policies in Eastern Europe (Deudney and Ikenberry, 2009: 49). The asymmetry in technological capabilities meant that the US could rely on its own BMD capabilities without Moscow’s cooperation, whilst suspicions of Moscow’s proliferation record encouraged Bush officials to reject the exchange of sensitive information. In the tense political

circumstances of 2007 and 2008, there were few incentives to give Vladimir Putin a ‘face saving’ solution, let alone an incentive to treat Russia as ‘an equal’.

Nevertheless, the fact that the US entered high-level negotiations on transparency measures regarding the third site after the cooperative efforts had failed shows that the Bush administration could not ignore Russian concerns and that the nuclear policy field was not of primary importance for the US administration. Whilst the administration’s policies suggest that it sought to ensure that the third site would be built prior to the presidential elections in 2008, domestic pressure regarding the Bush administration’s missile defence policy meant that the White House would only receive full funding for the third site if it tried to strengthen the dialogue with NATO. Technological limits of GBI technologies remained another important factor that hampered a more rapid build-up. Moreover, as will be discussed in the next chapter, the Czech Republic became increasingly sceptical about the proposed third site and thus limited the support for the Bush administration’s missile defence policy. At the same time, there were forces in the Bush administration (potentially the US president himself) that sought to prevent a conflict with Russia and that continued to adhere to a more realist approach on nuclear disarmament (Pikayev et al., 2007: 24). In addition, the US remained preoccupied with broader security issues related to the situation in Iraq, as well as US-Russian cooperation on Iran and Afghanistan (Rice, 2012: 580–581). There was therefore an incentive to dampen Moscow’s criticism whilst continuing to push for the third site. Washington’s willingness to encourage Russian criticism was most clearly evidenced by Robert Gates’ initial compromises on a US-Russian transparency regime. As Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategic Capabilities Green stressed:

Providing Russia transparency and predictability in our missile defense policy, plans, and programs is certainly in the interest of the United States. We will continue to [...] explore the possibility of additional confidence-building measures, and seek opportunities to cooperate on missile defense in the future (Green, 2007).

Putin’s ad-hoc actions at the Heiligendamm G8 Summit also left the US with little choice but to accept Russia’s suggestion for cooperative endeavours if it did not want to appear as being non-cooperative.

At the same time, the advantages of the US in missile defence technologies meant that the US Department of Defence remained unconvinced as to the mutual benefits of cooperation. In fact, the US Department of Defence had actively sought to avoid earlier presidential initiatives on

missile defence cooperation. In the US, Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld was pivotal in circumventing a cooperative approach to strategic stability and transparency measures. As one former official of the Department of Defence contended, ‘from the get-go, it was clear that the Pentagon had no interest in anything that was in [the 2002 BMD] document. Rumsfeld wanted to do the minimum and move on.’ (Draper, 2009) As such, Rumsfeld's actions ‘devalued what the president had originally said.’ (Draper, 2009) US officials remained concerned about opportunities for Russian intelligence gathering in any jointly operated system as this would increase the risk that this information could be passed to a third actor such as Iran (Weitz, 2010: 110). Another factor for America’s limited interest in cooperation efforts remained Washington’s unwillingness to share its autonomous detection and interception capabilities with potential competitors, as Karl-Heinz Kamp argued (Kamp, 2014, pers. comm.). The US systems in Poland and the Czech Republic, in contrast, allowed for a minimal sharing of intelligence with Russia and NATO allies. The Polish and Czech third site in US missile defence plans relied on US technology and command-and-control. It therefore did not run the risk of being subject to intelligence leakages to third parties (Weitz, 2010: 109–110). In addition, political considerations were at least as important as solely technological arguments as the White House did not consider Russia as a partner with whom one could pursue missile defence cooperation in ways that would give Russia a ‘veto power’ over US interception decisions, as Robert Gates emphasised (Baker, 2008).

Likewise, US moves to seek compromises through enhanced transparency measures were characterised by internal disputes regarding the appropriate measures to take with Russia. Whilst the White House and US bureaucrats agreed to move forward with the third site irrespective of Moscow’s opposition, the actual transparency policies remained contested and heavily restricted by US bureaucracies.

The Impact of BMD on the broader relationship

Despite the unsatisfactory outcome of missile defence negotiations and Russia’s rhetorical linkage to the broader relationship, missile defence as such had only a minor impact on other areas of cooperation and conflict such as conventional and the bilateral nuclear arms control regime, the status of Kosovo, cooperation on Iran, and the Russo-Georgian War in August 2008.

Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty and Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty

In Spring 2007, Putin announced the suspension of the inspections, notifications and data exchanges regimes of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, linking it to Washington's third site plans (Putin, 2008b). Disputes over conventional arms control in Europe had emerged much earlier and were initially unrelated to US missile defence policies. Whilst NATO and Russia agreed on mutual conventional force limitations in 1999, the Russian reluctance to remove its peacekeeping forces from Georgia and Moldova had created a crisis in the Conventional Forces in Europe regime. As a result, many new NATO member states remained reluctant to ratify the 1999 Istanbul Agreement (Wilcox, 2011: 571). In the early 2000s, Russia began to question the pre-eminence of the CFE Treaty in light of broader developments such as the War in Iraq and NATO's expansion into the Baltics. Throughout the mid-2000s, the value of the CFE Treaty was undermined by the reluctance of some new NATO member states to enter a legally binding treaty that could limit the deployment of NATO forces in their territories. As Waszczykowski, Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister, maintained:

We did not accept the basic agreements between NATO and Russia made throughout and doubted that Russia should have an equal say in alliance matters and [contrary to the disarmament spirit of the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act] were predisposed to strengthen our military potential vis-à-vis Russia with Washington's help (Waszczykowski, 2014, pers. comm.).

This general predisposition was shown in NATO's reluctance to enter negotiations despite Russia's withdrawal from Georgian bases and its partial compliance with the Istanbul agreements in Transnistria. As a result, the CFE Treaty was in serious crisis in its own right by 2006. In Russia's official complaints about NATO's non-committal stance in relation to the CFE Treaty, missile defence did not figure in at all (Wilcox, 2011: 577).

The impact of the third site on Russia's decision to suspend its CFE commitments was therefore at best indirect. In the eyes of Russian officials, the value of the treaty had decreased because of the termination of the ABM Treaty (Wilcox, 2011: 572). As such, the third site could have been a contributing factor to the devaluation of the CFE Treaty amongst Russian decision makers. As Wilcox argued, 'unfavourable developments in the European security landscape, especially the enlargement of NATO and [...] the deployment of a missile defence system, have occurred despite the presence of the CFE Treaty regime.' (Wilcox, 2011: 581) BMD thus added another component to the US-Russian dispute that was subsequently discussed in parallel with the future

of the CFE Treaty (Lachowski, 2008: 480). From this one could infer that BMD along other developments such as the build-up of military bases in Romania and Bulgaria and the Ukrainian and Georgian bid to join NATO decreased Russian incentives to insist on the CFE Treaty ratification (Ivanov, 2014, pers comm.). However, the unsettled nature of the CFE Treaty rather stiffened Russia's position to regard its tactical nuclear weapon as a powerful 'equalizer' to Western superiority, whilst conventional disarmament efforts remained detached from US BMD sites (Arbatov et al. 2010a: 7).

As for the immediate impact of the third site on the CFE regime, it appears that missile defence did not affect Russia's CFE Treaty suspension. In fact, the Russian Foreign Ministry later issued a statement that de-linked conventional disarmament from issues surrounding missile defences (Kramer and Shanker, 2007). A leaked US cable suggests that Russian officials consciously separated US missile defence and the future of the CFE Treaty ('U.S.-Russian Missile Defense Negotiations in Budapest on December 13, 2007', 2008). Moreover, the suspension of the CFE Treaty might have merely been an attempt to come up with an updated agreement on conventional force limitations in accordance with NATO's second enlargement round in 2004 (Wilcox, 2011). As the head of the Russian delegation at the CFE conference in 2007 argued, the 'suspension of the operation of the Treaty is not for us a goal in and of itself, but the final argument in the struggle for the restoration of its vitality. [We can] no longer and would not at any price fulfill an outdated treaty to the detriment of its security.' (Antonov, 2007) Likewise, Lavrov maintained 'if we cannot adapt this old instrument [the CFE Treaty] to the new realities, is it not time to review the situation and start working on a new system of arms control and confidence-building measures?' (Lavrov, 2007b)

Similar to disputes over the CFE Treaty, Russia had initially voiced criticisms towards the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty regime in the context of European missile defence in Poland and the Czech Republic. However, it is likely that the BMD component was only added to the list of Russian complaints of the INF regime. Previously, the geostrategic vicinity of states such as Pakistan, China, and India, and their increasing arsenals of medium-range missiles convinced military experts that Moscow's security would be undermined if it continued to adhere to the bilateral treaty with the US ('Russia hints at INF treaty withdrawal', 2007). As one Russian official stressed, 'Russia has other neighbors, countering which can be better done with medium-range missiles, not with intercontinental ones.' (Podvig, 2006) Dvorkin maintained that the Russian leadership had already shown its desire to free itself from the

constraints of the INF Treaty prior to the missile defence stand-off in the mid-2000s and had in fact actively negotiated with the US over a potential termination of the treaty (Dvorkin 2007). Regardless, because of significant support for the treaty in Moscow, the proposed suspension remained a remote possibility by the mid-2000s ('Russia Military Debates Withdrawal from the INF Treaty', 2006).

Iran

Whilst Democrats inside the US Congress consistently argued that the third site issue would undermine Russia's support for multilateral efforts to halt Iran's alleged nuclear weapons programme, the developments in 2007 and 2008 do not suggest that Moscow considered linking missile defence to the Iran sanction regime. Instead, as argued above, the Putin administration risked complications in its relations with Tehran because of Russia's support for missile defence cooperation with Washington.

Despite divergent geopolitical interests with Iran and the rejection of treating Iran as an 'irrational rogue state', Russia by and large consented to the proposed sanctions regime on Tehran. In August 2006, UNSC passed a resolution (1696) under UN Chapter VII that required Iran to stop its uranium enrichment programme. The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, assessed the resolution as a 'hard-line' stance against Iran and was personally 'surprised' that China and Russia had agreed to the resolution (ElBaradei, 2011: 214).

On 24 March 2007, at the height of the European 'missile crisis', the UN Security Council passed resolution 1747 to urge Iran to halt its uranium enrichment programme (UN Security Council, 2007). Simultaneously, Russia threatened to suspend the delivery of nuclear fuel for Iran's Bushehr reactor if Tehran remained unwilling to suspend its enrichment programme (despite Russia's previous reluctance to suspend the fuel deliveries under pressure from the US). As one US official maintained, 'clearly the Russians and the Iranians are getting on each other's nerves – and that's not all bad.' (Sciolino, 2007) And a senior European diplomat maintained that:

We consider this a very important decision by the Russians. It shows that our disagreements with the Russians about the dangers of Iran's nuclear program are tactical. Fundamentally, the Russians don't want a nuclear Iran (Sciolino, 2007).

In March and September 2008, Russia consented to further sanctions on Iran (United Nations, n.d.). While continuing conventional weapons sales to Tehran, Moscow was careful to reassure the US that it would not sell any weapons that would violate a 'multilateral or domestic regime', nor transfer any item that could increase Iran's capabilities ('Russian arms sales to India', 2007).

It can thus be argued that missile defence disputes had no lasting impact on Russia's cooperative efforts with the United States. Russian policies suggest that Moscow wanted first and foremost to be seen as cooperative in the eyes of US officials as Russia risked loosening its ties with Iran because of Russia's willingness to cooperation in an anti-Iranian missile defence shield. Moreover, Russia remained concerned about the potential development of an Iranian nuclear weapon (Ivanov, 2014, pers. comm).

The Georgian War

With regard to the immediate causes of the Russian-Georgian War in August 2008, the third site played an equally remote role in the US-Russian confrontation. The immediate outbreak of hostilities has been attributed to Georgian President Saakashvili (Light, 2010: 237). As Hewitt maintained, 'without Saakashvili's fateful decision, it is inconceivable that the Russians would have acted against Georgia.' (Hewitt, 2011) Russia's military reaction to Georgian actions in South Ossetia could have been a mere reaction to the failed attempts to solve territorial disputes in the Caucasus prior to the crisis (Petro 2008: 1545).

Moreover, US-Russian antagonisms over energy policies and counter-terrorism policies in Georgia were hardly related to US third site plans. NATO's announcement to accept Georgia and Ukrainian applications for membership made the Russian-Georgian conflict more immediate than the issue of missile defence (Bounds and Hendrickson, 2009: 20–21). The possibility that the preceding (potentially Democratic) US administration would likely move in Russia's direction on missile defence and nuclear arms control after the US presidential elections in late 2008 made a deliberate confrontation with Moscow counterproductive. Moreover, shortly before the Russian-Georgian War, Putin stressed that missile defence would remain a 'problem of substance', but that there are 'signs of progress'. (Putin, 2008a)

If there was a connection between Russian-Georgian hostilities and the third site, it emerged from more long-term developments over questions of 'respect, image and recognition'. (Allison, 2008) Lukyanov thus called the Russian response to Georgia's aggression a result of Russia's accumulated anger over the coloured revolutions, Washington's reliance on unilateral force in the post-Cold War world, US military training in Romania and Bulgaria, the dissatisfaction with the recognition of Kosovo as a state as well as the dispute over missile defences in Eastern Europe in 2007 (Lukyanov, 2012b). As discussed above, there is evidence that significant parts of Russia's civilian leadership linked the issue of NATO expansion with the consolidation of NATO's power base in Eastern Europe (Lavrov, 2007b). In this interpretation, Washington's crossing of the 'red line' of Russian opposition to the third US site in Eastern Europe was a factor in Moscow's perception of being ignored by US foreign policy makers and might have contributed to the willingness to oppose further US expansionism into the Caucasus.

Disarmament and Arms Control

Whereas nuclear weapons remained important for both the Putin and Bush administrations' foreign policy strategies, the actual context in which nuclear issues were discussed remained cooperative. As one Russian diplomat stated, in contrast to the Cold War when US deployments of cruise missiles had caused serious confrontations:

Now we will sit down [...] and discuss the issue [...] We may disagree. We may get sore, both sides, but we are not afraid of war. Nobody's afraid. If somebody tells you he's afraid, he's either lying or he needs to see a head shrink (quoted in Pouliot, 2010 Loc 1170).

In addition, as the chapter has shown, despite the arguably destabilising moves of the Bush administration in its nuclear policies, Russia's criticism of Washington's policies rested more on European security questions than on the impact of US manoeuvres on nuclear issues. The third site issue did only marginally affect US and Russian positions on nuclear arms control. Whilst the dichotomy between the preference for a formalisation of offensive weapons numbers with a legally binding framework on Russia's side and Washington's preference for nuclear flexibility remained (Clément-Nougier, 2005: 243), disputes over missile defence did not affect Moscow's willingness to push for a post-START I framework. Instead, it potentially increased Washington's willingness to enter a negotiated arms control framework. In 2006, the head of the US national nuclear security administration, Lynton Brooks, contended that 'technical arms control agreements are not the future of our relationship with the Russian Federation.' ('End of

Russian-US strategic arms control?', 2006) Rice and Gates maintained in early 2007 that 'the logic of Cold War "Mutual Assured Destruction" does not make sense in today's strategic environment.' (Rice and Gates, 2007) Whilst it cannot be resolved whether Russia's opposition to the third site weakened Washington's opposition to a legally binding framework to suit Russian priorities, the fact that the US consented to renewed discussions on a bilateral nuclear disarmament treaty could have been triggered by Moscow's indignation surrounding the third site (along with US Congressional pressure, which might have been in itself partly affected by Russia's forceful rhetoric). Throughout the standoff on missile defence, Washington seemed at least rhetorically willing to negotiate a new nuclear arms control accord. Gates explicitly linked Washington's renewed efforts in the field of arms control with missile defence disputes stating that:

We are trying to figure out a way to make them partners in it in a way that assuages their concerns and potentially helps them see opportunities for them and cooperation for us on this. We have some challenges on post-START. The United States has already made a major concession in its willingness to consider a legally binding treaty as a follow-on to the Moscow Treaty and START (Gates, 2008).

The US eventually consented to Russia's requests for a strategic framework declaration that would commit both sides to the extension of a legally binding arms control regime and missile defence cooperation (Gates, 2014: 2963). In April 2008 both presidents declared their 'intention to carry out strategic offensive reductions to the lowest possible level [...] We will continue development of a legally binding post-START arrangement.' (The White House, 2008) Moreover, US and Russian declaratory policies on nuclear arms control became more cooperative. Both the US and Russia jointly called for the multilateralisation of the INF Treaty.

Other commentators, however, have alleged that missile defence complicated discussions on nuclear arms control. According to Topychkanov, missile defence did not open the door for discussions on nuclear disarmament talks in a legally binding format as both sides were willing to come to a post-START I agreement regardless (Topychkanov, 2014, pers. comm.). Robert Gates alleged that 'legally binding [agreement] but short and adaptable to changing circumstances [...] had become muddled since the October [2007] meeting, including Russian presence at the sites in Poland and the Czech Republic,' thus suggesting that missile defence complicated arms control talks (Gates, 2014, loc. 2951). Brad Roberts, on the other hand, maintains that the Russian side was never committed to starting a negotiation process on a new legally binding arms control framework until after the presidential elections in the US as the inauguration of the

new US President promised Russia a more favourable starting point for nuclear arms control actions (Roberts, 2014, pers. comm.).

At the same time, it is likely that investments in Russia's nuclear forces remained proportional to Moscow's overall military spending and the Russian president remained cautious to not set in motion a policy that would echo the military overspending of the 1970s. The Kremlin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, maintained that 'we will have to create alternatives to [the US missile defence system] but with low cost and higher efficiency' and that any response would be within 'existing technologies' (Harding, 2007). In fact, Mathers has shown that Russia's military planning after the Georgian War focused on a conventional modernization of Russia's military, and not on enhanced spending on nuclear counter-measures to counter Washington's missile defence system (Mathers, 2012: 511).

Nevertheless, throughout the mid-2000s, Russia began to moderately increase its investments in its own missile defence capabilities and offensive countermeasures. Among Russian experts, it is contested that the modernisation programmes were intimately related to US missile defence and nuclear policies, Sutyagin and Pikayev have argued that the Russian programmes depended on US-Russian relations and US BMD, whereas Podvig maintains that the causality of the modernisation programmes cannot be linked to the third site. (Sutyagin, 2013b, pers. comm.; A. Pikayev, 2009; Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.). As Podvig highlighted, 'every move in Russia's nuclear policy can be officially sold as a move against missile defences. In reality, it often reflects other strategic policies.' (Podvig, 2014, pers. comm.) Likewise, Sokov argued that the tests and modernisation programmes were part of a broader Russian nuclear strategy that simply aimed at keeping up with US numbers and thus were only marginally related to the third site (Sokov, 2007).

General Domestic and Foreign Policy Impact of US Ballistic Missile Defence

As has been discussed above, the issue of missile defence remained by and large detached from other US-Russian policy areas, including nuclear disarmament. In fact, US policymakers closely involved in bilateral discussions have argued that the issue of NATO expansion into Georgia and Ukraine was the most pivotal bilateral issue in 2007 and 2008. According to Gates, obstacles on coming to an agreement on the independence of Kosovo as well as the NATO membership issue surrounding Ukraine and Georgia were significantly larger than the nuclear strategic framework (Gates, 2014: 2944). Missile defence remained an area in which both sides showed

flexibility to come to terms with each other. In fact, after months of disputes, the strategic framework declaration in April 2008 highlighted the interests of both sides in:

Creating a system for responding to potential missile threats in which Russia and the United States and Europe will participate as equal partners [and that Russia] appreciates the measures that the U.S. has proposed and declared that if agreed and implemented [confidence] measures will be important and useful in assuaging Russian concerns (The White House, 2008).

Washington's flexibility was most clearly evidenced in Gates' proposal for enhanced transparency measures and Moscow's eventual acceptance of Washington's initial transparency offers. Whilst most of these measures cannot be interpreted as a genuine rapprochement in the field of missile defence, no such declarations and flexibility were present in areas such as NATO enlargement.

Nevertheless, this chapter has also shown that the third site had a detrimental impact on the bilateral relationship. First, the deployment of missile defence on Polish soil sharpened the geostrategic rivalry between the US and Russia in Europe. As Buzhinsky argued, NATO enlargement and the expansion of military equipment into Poland and the Czech Republic at times became 'invariably indistinguishable'. (Buzhinsky, 2014, pers. comm.) According to Lilly, missile defence was transformed into a 'barometer' of Moscow's sense of the 'Western' encroachment into the post-Soviet space (Lilly, 2014b Loc 4558). For Lavrov, the US policy triggered a 'dangerous fragmentation' in European security through its missile defence policies: 'It is unacceptable for anyone to use the continent as their own strategic territory. Any unilateral anti-missile projects would fundamentally alter the continent's geo-strategic landscape (Lavrov, 2007a).

From Russia's perspective, according to Ivanov, the third site was considered to be a deliberate revision of the original agreements in the early 1990s (Ivanov, 2014, pers. comm.). For Lavrov, the unilateral US deployment plans undermined both the resolve of the NATO-Russia Council as well as the European Union as a discussion forum for European security (Lavrov, 2007a). The stationing of interceptors and radar installations in former Warsaw Pact states reinforced Moscow's perception that US policies were essentially anti-Russian in purpose, all the more so because the Bush administration, as Fitzpatrick claimed, increasingly attempted to counter Russian intimidation of Poland and the Czech Republic by pushing the third site plans forward (Fitzpatrick, 2009: 8).

Russia's fierce opposition to US plans, in turn, took American officials aback. US Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried maintained that Russia continued to regard the territory of the former Warsaw Pact states as the 'property of Russia' (Daniel Fried cited in *BBC Two - Putin, Russia and the West, War*, 2012, 2nd episode). The actions and considerations resulted in a Cold War-like dynamic in which both sides relied on countering the other side in diplomatic manoeuvres such as Putin's offer at the G8 Summit that forced the US into negotiations with Russia as well as Washington's expansion of missile defence cooperation talks with Ukraine. US third site plans triggered a circle of mutual accusations and hostilities (Fitzpatrick, 2009: 7–9).

Another impact of the negotiations came from the diplomatic exchanges. On-going negotiations did not decrease antagonisms, but at times heightened them. The information that was exchanged was often regarded as being rigged by the other side. For instance, whereas the US side argued that the radar in the Czech Republic would resemble a 'narrow beam radar' that would be incapable of detecting Russian missile sites in its Western regions (Fried, 2007b), US scientists highlighted that the Czech radar would be able to track the deployment of Russian ICBMs (Postol and Lewis, 2007). For Russian officials, the US manoeuvring confirmed that US policies were 'out of sync' with the development of Tehran's nuclear policies, in particular after the US intelligence services had claimed that Iran ceded its nuclear weapons programme in 2003, as Ivanov maintained (Ivanov, 2014, pers. comm.). Russian officials remained unconvinced about the US threat estimates, in particular after the US intelligence services had revealed that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons programme in 2003 ('Russia hopes for US readiness to professionally discuss antimissile shield', 2007). As a result, Russian officials were convinced that the US was 'persistently lying' (Buzhinsky, 2014, pers. comm.). As Lilly highlighted, 'the realization that Washington might be providing Moscow with incorrect information fed into already deeply entrenched feelings of mistrust and suspicion.' (Lilly, 2014b, loc. 2102)

Policymakers increasingly regarded the manoeuvres of the other side as cynical attempts to foster its own agenda. For Secretary of Defence Gates, Russia's strategy on missile defence followed a simple attempt to 'build enough opposition in Europe to stop the project' (Gates, 2014: 2876). Edelman maintained that 'a lot of what [the Russians] were doing was tactically aimed at preventing us from moving forward on missile defence' (Edelman cited in *BBC Two - Putin, Russia and the West, War*, 2012, 2nd episode). At the same time, the diplomatic atmosphere

in US-Russian negotiations also became frostier and decreased the willingness of both sides to deepen cooperation. As Buzhinsky recalls:

From the beginning, Bush officials maintained that Russia should not expect to be treated as moderately as by Bill Clinton. The Russian answer was that the US should at the same time ‘forget about Yeltsin’ to indicate that Moscow would not simply accept all US proposals (Buzhinsky, 2014, pers. comm.).

As argued above, Russia’s initial missile defence cooperation proposal was at least partially based on the attempt to simply undermine US policies by pretending to be cooperative. Likewise, US arguments were based on the necessity of protecting Washington from Iranian long-range missiles, but fell short of discussing the regional security implications of the third site in Eastern Europe.

At the same time, negotiations on technological features of US defences left a bad mark on the military personnel and diplomats involved. Buzhinsky recalls that ‘we could not agree on multiple statements from the US side. In fact, it appeared that we had entirely different physical and mathematical concepts of the world’ (Buzhinsky, 2014, pers. comm.). And Lavrov maintained, ‘we do not suffer from an exceptionalism complex, but we do not have grounds either to consider our analytic abilities and our ideas to be worse than another’s.’ (Lavrov, 2007b)

US negotiators developed a heightened wariness of Russia’s approach to complaining publically about the US. As a leaked US embassy cable maintained:

The American team had offered to cooperate “across the full spectrum of capabilities” – exploring new concepts, research and development, MD systems and components, early warning data, interoperability, and joint exercises. Although they had responded to many of the Russians’ specific concerns [...] Moscow continued to voice them in public (‘Allies react positively to U.S. Briefing on Missile Defense’, 2007)

Dvorkin, in turn, argued that one of the reasons for Moscow’s sharp reaction to Washington’s missile defence plans was the ‘arrogance’ with which the US administration makes unilateral decisions on strategic issues (Dvorkin 2007). In fact, the US reluctance to further discuss missile defence issues on a high level diplomatic framework (American officials who presented BMD issues were no higher than deputy assistant rank before 2007) was, according to Tsypkin, perceived as a ‘deliberate snub to President Putin, as well as part of a policy of ignoring Russia’ (Tsypkin, 2009: 787). According to General Buzhinsky, the Russian side lost trust in US officials because the Bush administration had earlier ‘promised’ to not extend the third site into Eastern Europe (Buzhinsky, 2014, pers. comm.). The Kremlin’s chief spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said

that Russia was 'extremely disappointed' by the way the US had conducted its missile defence policies (Harding, 2007). The eventual decision to deploy the site in Eastern Europe thus fed into the existing narratives of 'broken promises' on NATO enlargement and conventional troop deployments in former Warsaw Pact and post-Soviet states.

Disputes over the missile defence site in Poland and the Czech Republic also broadened the differences between the respective security narratives on both sides. Whereas US reactions to Russian diplomacy centred on Moscow's aggressive rhetoric, the Kremlin's perception primarily focused on the decision to extend military equipment to Russia's borders despite the pledges of the 1990s. As a result, pre-existing perceptions that Moscow would aim at 'driving a wedge' between the NATO allies and undermine justifiable US security projects gained traction (Thielmann, 2014a, pers. comm.). Rice regarded Russia's strategy as the pursuit of an 'old game [...] splitting the allies from the United States by playing on the fears of the Europeans, particularly the Germans, of conflict with the Kremlin.' (Rice, 2012: 578) Rice also stressed that:

I think it's unfortunate that the Russian head of the Strategic Rocket Forces would come out and say that somehow Poland the Czech Republic will now be on the target list of Russia [...] Poland and the Czech Republic are independent countries that make their own decisions (Rice, 2007).

US ambassador to NATO, Burns, stressed that:

American interests are interpreted cynically, as the disgruntled complaints of a competitor, and viewed through the prism of a 1990s story line in which the West seeks to keep Russia down including by providing it of arms markets ('Russian arms sales to India, 07Paris2725: Wikileaks Cablegate.', 2007).

One underlying cause for the increase in mutual suspicions was that both sides failed to account for the domestic and strategic causes of US and Russian BMD policies. 'The US', Buzhinsky maintained, 'is the most practical nation in the world [...] Why would it pursue an irrational policy of protecting itself against non-existing threats?' (Buzhinsky, 2014, pers. comm.) Likewise, according to Stent, US officials reiterated that Moscow would place its analysis on 'irrational worst case assumptions' and would not grasp that the system would never turn against Russia (Stent, 2014: 154). Missile defence disputes also reanimated old stereotypes. In a Senate Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Stanford Professor Michael McFaul maintained that the 'the Russian negative reaction to the proposed deployment of interceptors in NATO allies reflects again an irrational, zero-sum attitude to security issues.' (McFaul, 2007: 22)

Missile defence discussion fell short of significantly altering the existing mutual contempt because of the purely military character of the exchanges. It can be argued that neither Russia, which had accepted the termination of the ABM Treaty without reverting to a nuclear arms race, nor the US, which refrained from deploying a third site on US soil that could have been more effective in countering Russian ICBM's than the European third site, were pursuing their policies based on military rationales. In fact, the deployment of US systems on the territory of the Warsaw Pact was at its core a political and geostrategic issue that neither of the two parties were willing to discuss more openly.

The case study has also shown that presidential missile defence policies remained conditioned on domestic foreign policy formulations. As such, a major variable in the formulation of missile defence policy remained the internal pressure from the bureaucracies and members of the executive branch. This was most clearly evidenced when Secretary of Defence Gates had to reverse some of initial US overtures to Russia because of pressure from the State Department. As Gates recalls, 'I was not sure how much consternation my proposal would cause in Washington when we reported what we had offered.' (Gates cited in *BBC Two - Putin, Russia and the West, War*, 2012, 2nd episode) Likewise, Rice suggests that the 'draft of the proposal, which the Pentagon and the State Department had sent to the Russians to follow up on our visit, had been long on bureaucratic conservatism and short on innovation.' (Rice, 2012: 677)

In addition, Russian intimidation of Eastern European states, in itself possibly a means to force the US to come to the negotiating table and to increase pressure amongst NATO allies, was increasingly used as a justification to continue to pursue the third site plans. According to Deudney and Ikenberry, for Bush administration officials, concessions to Russia on missile would often resemble an 'appeasement policy' that had to be countered (Deudney and Ikenberry, 2009: 58). As a result, according to Brad Roberts, US policies at times followed the principle that 'Russia didn't like it so it must be the right thing to do'. (Roberts, 2014, pers. comm.) Security experts also openly suggested using the third site as a means to deter Russian aggression. In a Congressional hearing, Frederick Kagan from the American Enterprise Institute maintained that 'the ballistic missile defense system that we have installed in Poland [...] should be helping these states to become unattractive targets of further Russian aggression by providing them with defensive capabilities' (Kagan, 2008: 58).

In addition, US policymakers as well as the security community continued to picture Russia as a proliferation danger, in part to implicitly bolster arguments in favour for the third site. David Satter, a witness in a Senate Hearing on US-Russian relations, stressed that ‘we see a country that feels itself threatened by plans for a United States defensive antimissile system in Poland and the Czech Republic while supporting the development of nuclear weapons in Iran’ (Satter, 2007: 26). Likewise Senator Royce (Rep.) maintained that ‘the Iranians are [possibly] developing a long-range missile with Russian technology, and of course, Russian technology as opposed to North Korean technology is a real shot in the arm here’. (Royce, 2007: 23) John C. Rood, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, stressed that ‘ballistic missile-related cooperation from entities in China, North Korea, and Russia over the years has helped Iran move forward toward its goal of becoming self-sufficient in the production of ballistic missiles. That is a real concern for us.’ (Rood, 2007: 23–24)

The domestic debates in the US did not get lost on Russian policymakers. Referring to the US missile defence debate, Foreign Minister Lavrov maintained that:

The unnecessary haste in matters that can wait provoked alienation between Russia and the United States. [They reduce] the area of our interaction and produce an effect of “shagreen skin,” which can determine its own dynamics in relations between the two countries, especially if ordinary Americans are told that Russia is to blame for almost all the troubles of their country (Lavrov, 2007b).

In Russia, in turn, US missile defence policies served as a symbol of the recklessness of the ‘West’ among media outlets (Antonenko, 2008: 28). It is also possible that the Kremlin used the rhetoric on US aggressiveness to defuse from the democracy agenda that Washington employed towards Russia in the second term of the Bush administration. Russian opposition leader Kasparov suggested that ‘Putin is ready to drop all objections [on missile defence] if Americans and Europeans will stop messing around with Russian democracy and human rights.’ (Kasparov, 2007) As such, it is likely that missile defence was employed to contribute to a more anti-American tone in Russia. Lastly, missile defence perpetuated the hostile mindset of the Russian military, which in turn asserted its tough stance on nuclear matters on the civilian leadership, thus fostering a less compromising stance of the Kremlin towards the United States.

Conclusion

Throughout the mid-2000s, a conflict that had previously been based on divergent military security estimates, the framework of international non-proliferation policies, and a different vision of world order had turned into a geopolitical conflict that became entangled with divergent concepts of the European security architecture. The dispute over missile defence reflected the struggle over an expansive geostrategic and hegemonic US strategy to consolidate and increase its sphere of influence in the vicinity of Russia and a defensive Russian attempt to halt Washington's expansionism.

The outbreak of the 'European Missile Crisis' was precipitated by the different strategic outlooks of the US and Russia. Whereas Washington's foreign policy focus extended towards a global outlook of being the 'world policeman', Russia continued to interpret its security in the context of US actions. The result was a deliberate neglecting of Russia's security interests, which Russia was not willing to accept (Sakwa, 2008: 241). The nuclear doctrine of the Bush administration reinforced the suspicions of the Russian military towards the US as it threatened to undermine the military and political value of Russia's nuclear deterrent (and thereby Russia's influence in international affairs).

Despite Vladimir Putin's comparison of the situation to the Cuban Missile crisis in 1962, the 2007 crisis merely represented one of multiple arenas of US-Russian antagonism. The irritation in terms of missile defence occurred in a 'broader, [already] deteriorated political context' as Fernandes highlighted (Fernandes, 2009: 10). As such, the broader deterioration in bilateral relations was indicative of the US-Russian missile defence debate. The outbreak of the missile defence crisis was taking a confrontational path not because of the immediate military dangers to Russia's security, but because little seemed to be contributing to improving the relationship in other areas.

Missile defence did not significantly affect other fields of contention and cooperation. In part, this was because nuclear security-related policies were conducted in an environment in which mutual nuclear attacks remained unthinkable. The military-security related lack of importance in

nuclear matters partly explains the flexibility of the US and Russia in matters of nuclear policies. Whereas Russia eventually consented to US missile defence plans, Washington was willing to grant Moscow an enhanced bilateral arms control framework. At the same time, the lacking military significance of missile defences allowed the US and Russia to continue to focus on economic cooperation. Both sides remained interested in pursuing talks on cooperation – in the case of the US, so as to not endanger its broader interest in cooperating on terrorism, Afghanistan and Iran; in Russia's case to avoid cutting ties with the US (Pikayev et al., 2007: 24). In questions of the Euro-Atlantic security sphere, missile defence was only one of a number of issues, together with the CFE Treaty and future prospects of CIS countries. Overall, therefore, the impact of US BMD on the bilateral relationship was remote. Despite its alleged destabilising character, the third site did not immediately undermine mutual cooperation towards Iran and prospects for a nuclear disarmament agenda (Russia continued to seek a post-SORT agreement), and only very indirectly affected mutual grievances over NATO enlargement into the post-Soviet sphere, the status of Kosovo and the Russian-Georgian War in August 2008.

Nevertheless, missile defence disputes heightened the contentions over the Euro-Atlantic security space and fostered cynicism and Cold War-like zero-sum thinking. The cooperative efforts of both sides suggest that Washington's interest was based on limiting cooperation to avoid the exchange of sensitive information and technologies with Russia, whereas Moscow's interest lay not in some form of limited cooperation, but rather in limiting US ballistic missile defence. Whilst Russian rhetorical aggression, its questioning of nuclear and conventional treaty regimes, and its emphasis on military counter-measures might have contributed to Washington's willingness to consider Russia's concerns, these achievements at the same time reinforced suspicions and antagonisms among US officials and Eastern European allies.

Chapter 6

NATO-Russian Missile Defence Diplomacy, 2007-2008

Introduction

This chapter examines the impact of US missile defence policies on NATO-Russian and US-Russian relations. With the US decision to deploy missile defence interceptors in Poland and a complementary radar site in the Czech Republic, Washington's third site plans directly affected the security landscape in Europe. For European NATO member states, questions over the right direction for the European security architecture emerged alongside difficulties regarding the relationship with both the United States and Russia.

The section argues that the third site plans devalued cooperative efforts on missile defence in the NATO-Russia Council, increased divisions among NATO member states, and raised questions over the value of the institutional security settings in Europe. The attempts by Russia and the US to bolster European support for the respective policy preferences as well as Russia's approach to warn Eastern European states from pursuing their pro-American policies negatively affected US-Russian relations. Missile defence thus deepened existing security narratives. As a direct result of the alliance's focus on overcoming divisions among the US and its European partners, Russia's opposition was marginalised. As such, the European missile crisis revealed the structural limitations of the European post-Cold War security architecture in which Moscow's options remained either to accept US moves seen as detrimental to Russia's interests or to aggressively protest as an 'outsider', with the latter in turn reinforcing alliance solidarity against the Kremlin.

The section commences with a description of the various independent strands of missile defence policies throughout 2007 and 2008. It then focuses on the development of NATO as a collective security organisation and its role to integrate Russian positions into its security deliberations. The chapter argues that initial obstacles existing between NATO and Russia were not triggered by the centrality of the alliance in the European security space, but rather by its lack of power. To an extent, the US ballistic missile defence plans increased the importance of NATO in coordinating European security issues. However, this enhanced role did not translate into a more Russia-friendly outlook of the alliance.

Chronology of events

In the early 2000s, three distinct, yet mutually influencing developments in the field of missile defence emerged alongside each other: cooperative efforts within NATO on developing an alliance-wide short-range missile defence systems (ALTBMD), NATO-Russian cooperation on theatre missile defences as well as bilateral US negotiations with Eastern European states on setting up the third US GBI site in Europe.

Whereas NATO had earlier agreed that an alliance-wide missile defence system would be politically feasible (Rademaker, 2004), there was little progress in terms of detailed practical steps (Zadra, 2014b, pers. comm.). Similarly, cooperative progress in the field of NATO-Russian theatre missile defence cooperation set up in 2002 remained slow (Weitz 2005: 70). Whereas NATO-Russian cooperation on theatre missiles defence at times remained the only forum for joint activity between Russia and NATO (Bittner, 2007: 11), Russian officials criticised that cooperation remained limited to defining terminology, joint concepts for operation, experimental concepts and training and exercises (Weitz 2005: 69). Moreover, differences over threat assessments in NATO-Russia Council discussions could not be overcome (Fiorenza, 2007). Despite the moderate nature of theatre missile defence cooperation and the crisis in US-Russian relations throughout 2007 and 2008, Russia and NATO continued to conduct common exercises (Tigner, 2008).

At the same time, NATO-Russian cooperative efforts were increasingly overshadowed by bilateral negotiations between the US and various Eastern European allies on placing US GBI systems on European soil (Butler and Butcher, 2008). In reaction to US bilateral negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic, Moscow threatened to point missiles at the third site. This, in turn, triggered a cycle of rhetorical confrontations between Russian officials on the one side and Polish and Czech officials on the other side. The Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karel Schwarzenberg, warned in February 2007 that Russian 'blackmail' over the proposed US missile defence system would 'backfire' ('Neighbours warn Russia after missile row', 2007), whilst the Polish Prime Minister Kaczynski alleged that 'Russia hopes that Poland will once again come under its sphere of influence.' (Sieff, 2007).

At the same time, NATO's Secretary General de Hoff Scheffer criticised the US third site approach, highlighting that 'the principle of the indivisibility of security should apply. There is a

shared desire that any US system should be complementary to any NATO missile defence system.’ (Mates, 2007) Whereas the exclusion of alliance members from deliberations on the stationing of US sites in Europe was one bone of contention, European leaders also reasserted their previous scepticism about Washington’s adherence to missile defence as such. Luxembourg’s Foreign Minister Asselborn noted that ‘it is incomprehensible that after the end of the 20th century and the fall of the Berlin Wall anyone should start escalating again.’ (‘NATO stepping up talks on missile defense amid concerns over US plans’, 2007) French President Jacques Chirac warned against the emergence of ‘new divisions’ in Europe (‘France calls for comprehensive dialogue on U.S. anti-missile shield deployment’, 2007).

Moreover, South-Eastern NATO allies such as Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey criticised that the third site would create different zones of security within NATO as the US system would not extend its umbrella to their respective territories (Bauer and Baumann, 2007: 9). In addition, Germany, France, Austria and Ireland initially supported a greater role for the European Union with regard to the stationing of missile defence systems on European soil (Butler and Butcher, 2008). The High Representative of the European Union, Javier Solana, stressed that the EU should take part in BMD negotiations (Solana, 2007). At the same time, Poland and the Czech Republic were criticised for excluding their NATO allies from BMD discussions with the US (‘NATO stepping up talks on missile defense amid concerns over US plans’, 2007).

In light of on-going criticism, Washington increased its efforts to develop a more inclusive approach to the US third site plans. In April 2007, US officials highlighted that the ‘indivisibility of security’ should apply to all 26 allies and that the systems in Poland and the Czech Republic should be regarded as a complementary site to an alliance-wide missile defence system. US officials promoted a two-tier solution in which NATO would pool its short-range and medium-range national systems, which would then together with the US system in Poland and the Czech Republic form an ‘integrated and complete missile defense system’ to ‘cover all of the Alliance.’ (Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 2007: 20) In mid-2007, the alliance commenced a study that focused on the possibilities for linking the third site with NATO’s short-range missile defence system to protect the South-Eastern regions of the alliance (Hildreth and Ek, 2009: 18). US diplomats also stressed the centrality of developing a common threat perspective on missile and WMD proliferation among European allies (Bell, 2007).

At the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, NATO declared that the third site would make a 'substantial contribution' to NATO's counter-proliferation efforts. The alliance also called for linking NATO BMD and Russian defence capabilities at an appropriate time (NATO, 2008). According to US officials, the multilateral actions towards cooperative efforts within the alliance smoothed the diplomatic frictions (Fried, 2008). At the same time, the US faced challenges with Poland and the Czech Republic over the deployment of missile defences. Polish and Czech governments came under increasing domestic pressure for their support of the third site. The US National Intelligence Estimate in November 2007, alleging that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons production plans decreased the support of the Czech Republic for a swift deployment of the US radar on its territory (Hildreth and Ek, 2009: 13).

Whereas the Polish Kaczynski government remained hostile to ideas of multilateralising negotiations to include European NATO members as well as Russia ('Neighbours concerns no Problem for Poland', 2007), the election of Tusk as the new Polish President in November 2007 meant that Warsaw now sought to 'NATOise' the missile defence debate (cited in Hildreth and Ek, 2009: 10). Polish Foreign Minister Sikorski reiterated that Poland would 'feel no threat from Iran.' ('Poland signals step back from US missile shield', 2007) The Tusk government also offered transparency measures with Russia as long as this would be based on reciprocity and Russian military personnel would not be permanently stationed at the US site in Poland.

Most challenging for the Bush administration's plans to conclude an agreement with Poland prior to the US presidential elections in November 2008 were Warsaw's demands for additional security guarantees (Hildreth and Ek, 2009: 10). Polish Foreign Minister Sikorski argued that Moscow's plans to station several missile batteries in the vicinity of Poland's borders as well as Russia's plans to target the third site in Poland would increase the political and military costs for Poland. To elevate Poland's security, Warsaw thus argued that the US should donate and deploy short-range missile defences (THAAD and Patriot) in Poland (Dylla 2010: 38 – initially, Poland asked for 12 to 15 PAC batteries). According to a United States European Command (EUCOM) official, the Polish demands for US support to Poland's military modernisation programme were initially between \$30 billion and \$40 billion (Hynek and Stritecky, 2010b: 182–183). At the same time, Poland argued that Washington should include the third site in the alliance defence architecture because otherwise 'we will suspect that America, having protected itself, will not devote further resources to a NATO system.' (Sikorski, 2007) In addition, Poland insisted on access to US intelligence information on Eastern Europe (Wagrowska 2007: 19).

According to a leaked cable from the US embassy, US diplomats criticised Polish requests as being ‘tactical and naïve’. (‘US embassy cables’, 2010b) However, on 14 August 2007 the Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Andrzej Kremer and US chief-negotiator John Rood signed the Polish-US third site agreement against the backdrop of the Russian-Georgian War (Jennings, 2008). In the final agreement, Washington agreed to the stationing of one Patriot battery, first on a rotational and later on a permanent basis. The agreement also contained a pledge for negotiations on ‘political-military concerns’, which the Polish side interpreted as an assurance of US assistance to Warsaw in the event of political or military blackmail from Russia (Dylla 2010: 30). Poland also succeeded in urging NATO member states to call on Russia for halting its military responses to the third site deployment (NATO, 2008b). Nevertheless, disputes over the permanent stationing of the PAC-3 battery persisted (‘US embassy cables’, 2010b).

Russia reacted with fierce objections to the US-Polish agreement. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned that Russia’s response to the deal would ‘go beyond diplomatic demarches’ and said the missile deal would create a new arms race on the European continent ‘and beyond its borders’. (‘US-Poland missile defence deal strains relations with Russia’, 2008) The newly elected Russian President Medvedev maintained:

If a decision is taken [...] without consultations in Europe, we cannot but have the impression that tomorrow could bring yet further decisions to deploy yet more missile defence systems. With this kind of unipolar decision-making process, there are no guarantees against this happening (Medvedev, 2008b)

NATO-Russian Relations

The third site issue has to be interpreted against the background of a deepening crisis within NATO and the dysfunctional character of the NATO-Russia Council. Disputes over missile defences within NATO originated in a rift between alliance members that had supported the US intervention in Iraq and countries that had remained opposed to US policies (Hoffmann, 2006). According to Smith, the French and German opposition to legitimise force in Iraq created ‘one of the most dramatic transatlantic disputes in history’. (Smith, 2008: 8) For Kay, NATO had ‘become politically unmanageable and militarily dysfunctional and appears, at best, strategically confused’ by the mid-2000s (Kay, 2005: 69). Throughout the mid-2000s, Washington’s favouring of unilateral solutions over consensus-based decision making within NATO significantly decreased the influence of Western European NATO states in the alliance

(Münkler, 2005: 11–13). Through the decision to bilaterally seek agreements on BMD with Eastern European allies, the Bush administration pursued a foreign policy course that fostered a shift in the gravity within the alliance ('Outrage at "old Europe" remarks', 2003).

In parallel with the marginalisation of NATO's collective decision-making, NATO-Russian relations had fallen short of earlier commitments. The official NATO-Russia Council declaration of 2002 envisioned that Russia and NATO would 'meet as equals at 27' (although it reserved the right for NATO to retreat to its 26 members when Moscow and NATO could not agree). The NATO-Russia Council would foster an 'equal partnership' and provide a:

Mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision, and joint action for the member states of NATO and Russia on a wide spectrum of security issues in the Euro-Atlantic region (Declaration by Heads of State and Government of NATO Member States and the Russian Federation, 2002).

The NATO-Russia Council would also operate on the principle of consensus and a continuous political dialogue on security issues 'with a view to early identification of emerging problems'. The structure and timing of NATO-Russia meetings and the quantity of committees and expert groups aimed at fostering a closer cooperation (Declaration by Heads of State and Government of NATO Member States and the Russian Federation, 2002).

However, as Smith highlighted, in the years following its inauguration, the NATO-Russia Council did not substantially change the security relationship between NATO and Russia. NATO was unwilling to meet Moscow's demands for security guarantees with regard to NATO enlargement and missile defences (Smith, 2008: 8). As a reaction to what was perceived as a development detrimental to Moscow's interests, Russia's Foreign Minister stressed that:

We firmly raise questions about the transformation of NATO, the alliance's plans for enlargement, the reconfiguration of the U.S. military presence in Europe, the deployment of elements of the American missile defense system [...] and NATO's refusal to ratify the CFE Treaty (Lavrov, 2006).

Antonenko and Giegerich have stressed that the NATO-Russian Council failed to produce any strategic rapprochement between NATO and Russia, in part because 'the West does not hesitate to ignore Russian positions when doing so carries little cost.' (Antonenko and Giegerich, 2009: 14) In addition, the purpose of the NATO-Russia Council differed widely for the respective parties. According to Pouliot, whilst multiple NATO states saw the council as a means of

fostering practical cooperation so as to avoid Moscow's criticism on NATO enlargement and the third site, Russia aimed at politicising the council to foster a strategic agenda to gain political influence (Pouliot, 2010: 1407). The diverging aims, in turn, resulted in what Antonenko and Giegerich have branded 'process over substance' in NATO-Russian relations (Antonenko and Giegerich, 2009: 15). As Smith argued, both sides started to 'question the value of dialogue for dialogue's sake'. (Smith 2008: 10). NATO's suspension of the NATO-Russia Council in the wake of the Russian-Georgian War not only made clear the differences in understanding European security, it also contradicted the assumption that the Council could itself foster mutual understanding through multiple cooperative efforts and negotiations (Antonenko and Giegerich, 2009: 16–17).

The cooperative efforts also did not improve the deep strategic division over NATO enlargement and missile defence. Pouliot highlighted that:

The disappearance of the possibility of mutual force was countered by latent mistrust, the normalization of disputes was stymied by the elusiveness of the NRC diplomatic momentum and daily cooperation [...] was thwarted by clashing organizational cultures (Pouliot, 2010 Loc 1112).

According to Arbatov et al., the cooperative working groups represented 'no more than lengthy talking shops on various issues.' (Arbatov et al. 2010a: 15)

Europe's Foreign and Missile Defence Policy: Description and Interpretation

Whereas the former section outlined the intricate complications within NATO and between NATO and Russia more generally, the following sections looks at the European missile defence policies. It commences with the Polish view on missile defences and then interprets Germany's stance on the third site. An analysis of the Polish and German considerations in the field of missile defence helps to reveal the reasons for the marginal role of Europe in formulating an independent missile defence policy and the eventual side-lining of Russia. It also seeks to clarify Russian and American influences on the policymaking of Poland and Germany, thereby extracting insights into potential fields of US-Russian confrontations.

Poland

Poland's support for American missile defence interceptors was primarily based on the wish to strengthen the US-Polish alliance in order to protect Warsaw from Russian aggression (Dunn,

2002: 65). For the Polish government, the US BMD plans were regarded as another important step towards strengthening Poland's ties with the US (Durcalek, 2014, pers. comm.). The Polish foreign policy strategy of 'installing itself into the role of a senior "Pro-European Atlantist"' (Hynek and Stritecky, 2010b: 181), as Hynek and Stritecky have argued, was in turn endorsed by the Bush administration that regarded Poland as a 'new model ally' (Dunn, 2002).

Whereas Poland's support of US missions elevated its stance among US foreign policymakers, its foreign policy tended to bypass NATO (Pacula, 2014, pers. comm.). The Polish government regarded earlier commitments between Russia and NATO with scepticism. The notion of transforming NATO from a military alliance into a political organisation was criticised. In order to undermine the non-military spirit of NATO's commitments of the 1990s (in which Poland perceived a lack of being able to decisively influence the policies of the alliance), Warsaw attempted to shape NATO's policy direction in its favour. It aimed at convincing allies to deploy troops within the territory of Poland, to exercise long-term military manoeuvres, and to change and update NATO's contingency planning (Waszczykowski, 2014, pers. comm.).

For the Law and Justice Party under Kaczynski, the third site represented a 'trip wire' for US or NATO military presence on Polish soil. If the United States committed itself to station the interceptor sites together with US military personnel, it would enhance Poland's security and prospects for a quantitative increase in the number of US military personnel in the future (Pisarski, 2014, pers. comm.). According to Pisarski, the 'trip wire' approach was largely based on using the presence of the US army to get some psychological effects towards potential Russian aggressions (Pisarski, 2014, pers. comm.)

The Kaczynski administration maintained that the mere presence of the US military would elevate Poland's influence within NATO. As Deputy Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski maintained, missile defence was regarded as a 'supplement to NATO guarantees [...] It was a breakthrough to look at Poland as more than a buffer zone between old NATO states and Russia'. (Waszczykowski, 2014, pers. comm.) It was also argued that an unconditional support for the third site could strengthen Washington's commitments to Georgia and Ukraine's NATO membership and would additionally contribute to US support for Polish high-level positions within NATO (Śliwiński, 2012: 201). In line with deliberations among officials in the Bush administration, there was also fear that the opening up of BMD decision-making to NATO, and in particular Germany, would complicate negotiations and spoil or unravel the project (Kulesa,

2014a, pers. comm.). Of less importance among Polish policymakers were security threats stemming from Iran, the technological capabilities of the US system, the efficiency of which was questioned, and the fact that most Polish commentators interpreted the third site primarily as a project related to US security (and much less for European security).

With the inauguration of the Tusk administration in November 2007, Poland's foreign and missile defence policy changed significantly and became more multilateral (Sikorski, 2009). A central factor in the Tusk administration's deliberations was the cooling of the US-Polish relationship. By 2007, Polish attitudes towards the US had changed to a marked disappointment, in particular among the Polish public. Within Poland there was a widespread feeling that Poland had become a 'third league ally' of Washington, as Dylla argued (Dylla 2010: 37).

Regarding Poland's support for the third site, Foreign Minister Sikorski highlighted the potential dangers of Poland's one-sided support for US BMD as it could 'weaken NATO, deepen Russian paranoia or could cost the US some of its last friends on the continent.' (Sikorski, 2007) Behind this stance stood various possible considerations. Firstly, decision makers in the Tusk government argued that Poland's broader support for the US had not brought sufficient benefits in the past (Pisarski, 2014, pers. comm.). According to Dylla, Poland's hardened negotiating stance was in part meant to overcome the stigma of the shield representing Warsaw as an 'unconditional' ally to the US (Dylla, 2010: 38). This line of argument was closely related to a more psychological fear of Poland becoming an 'international laughing stock' if the US were to eventually withdraw from the project under a future US president (Hildreth and Ek, 2009: 16)

The Tusk administration might also have speculated that the Bush administration was willing to concede additional support to Poland's security (Kulesa, 2014b: 15). Moreover, there was an understanding that further US commitments to Poland's security presented a 'win-win situation' because the US was considered to be equally interested in containing Moscow's regional ambitions (Pisarski, 2014, pers. comm.). In addition, as Dylla argued, the preferences of the Tusk government were shaped by popular support amongst the Polish electorate for pushing the US for further security concessions (Dylla, 2010: 29). One commentator also highlighted the fact that the conflict and subsequent endorsement of the third site allowed the Tusk administration a 'face saving' solution after Warsaw had failed to extract substantial additional security concessions in the form of advanced weaponry from the US (Hynek and Stritecky, 2010b: 183, footnote 11).

At the same time, Washington's military presence to counter a potentially resurgent Russia remained a pivotal aim for the administration ('US-Poland missile defence deal strains relations with Russia', 2008). According to Kulesa, the additional requests for US security guarantees continued to have a specific anti-Russian edge that aimed at countering Russia's attempts to decrease US influence in Europe (Kulesa, 2014a, pers. comm.). The approach of the Tusk administration regarding a more flexible stance towards Russia could therefore be interpreted as largely tactical. Whilst the Polish administration argued that it was not willing to serve as an American launching base for missiles directed against Russia and offered reciprocal transparency measures on missile defences towards Russia (Kulesa, 2014a, pers. comm.), Dylla argued that Polish actions towards Russia were primarily based on the willingness to be perceived as a less 'Russophobic' partner amongst European allies. At the same time, Poland continued to promote an enlargement of NATO into post-Soviet states (Bil, 2010: 155). It is therefore likely that the Tusk administration's policy was not based on a generally friendlier and more forthcoming attitude towards Russia, but on reducing both the domestic and international criticism – in particular in relations to sceptical European NATO states – so as to increase the acceptance of Poland's long-held security aims.

Nevertheless, the US-Polish agreement in August 2008 fell short of Polish wishes. Kulesa maintains that the Patriot battery that was provided on a rotational basis, and the fact that Poland would have to financially cover its deployment together with the limited utility of the training exercises cannot be regarded as a diplomatic success (Kulesa, 2014a, pers. comm.). On the other hand, the stationing of a rotational PAC-3 battery deployment on Polish soil meant that Warsaw would avoid becoming a 'laughing stock' should the Obama administration seek to cancel the third site. In fact, the Patriot commitment functioned as a 'door opener' for on-going US-Polish military cooperation. The aviation attachment programme that was concluded in 2011 was a direct outcome of attempts to fill the void after the Patriot programme was cancelled (Expert on Missile Defence, pers. comm.).

Germany

The domestic debate in Germany on missile defence and Berlin's broader foreign policy aims fundamentally diverged from Warsaw's. Throughout the 2000s, a normative, consensus-oriented multilateralism, including an active, multilateral arms control policy, remained one of the core

principles of Berlin's foreign policy (Staak, 2008: 31). Policymakers alleged that the third site would decrease German and European security, in particular if NATO would be deprived of influencing the deployment plans of territorial missile defence in Europe (Kauder, 2009: 276). Poland's and the Czech Republic's unilateral decisions to seek negotiations with the US threatened to undermine the European security pillar (Staak, 2008: 35–37). Confrontations over missile defence were also detrimental to Germany's attempts to foster a climate for further nuclear and conventional disarmament in Europe (German diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.). The scientific service of the German Bundestag remained 'sceptical' about the technological premises of the third site plans (Lübbert, 2007).

Nevertheless, the internal power shift towards a great coalition government consisting of Christian Democrats (CDU) and Social Democrats (SPD) from 2005 onwards meant that Berlin joined the 'chorus of Russia sceptics', as Rahr argued (Rahr, 2007: 139). With the inauguration of Angela Merkel, a US diplomat assessed, complications to seek a common approach towards Russia 'has been put in the past' (Fried cited in US Senate, 2007: 15). The CDU's foreign policy principles also stressed that stable German-Russian relations could not evolve at the expense of third states. Germany's policy towards Russia, the CDU leadership reasoned, can only be successful 'if it is coordinated with NATO and the European Union.' (Kauder, 2009: 276)

Whereas there were initial tendencies to foster a German grand strategy based on a European outlook (Masala, 2008: 25), in 2005 Chancellor Merkel emphasised the primacy of NATO in Berlin's security policy (Merkel, 2005). As a result, Merkel removed the missile defence topic from the European Union agenda and pledged to discuss the topic within a NATO framework (Vinocur, 2007). Merkel stressed that BMD should be seen as a collective alliance project along the lines of the 2002 Prague Summit commitment (Meier, 2007). Policymakers in the CDU argued that rather than triggering an arms race, US missile defences could ultimately promote global disarmament because of the defensive nature of the system (Bauer and Baumann, 2007: 12). Andreas Schockenhoff, Deputy Head of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, stressed that a territorial system could also halt Iranian ambitions to further accelerate its nuclear programme (Schockenhoff, 2008).

Germany accepted the stationing of the third site as long as a complementary system could protect the entire NATO territory and discussions on command and control structures would start (Schreer, 2008). For the Merkel administration, the unity of NATO remained the most

important motivation for its missile defence policy. As Defence Minister Jung stressed, the third site could play an important 'protecting role' for Europe (cited in Beunderman, 2007). The Merkel administration also remained cautious of being thought of as too accommodating towards Russian priorities. As much as the Foreign Ministry aimed at integrating Russia into a dialogue, Foreign Minister Steinmeier stressed that 'neither the EU nor NATO shall be divided [by the third site debate].' (Steinmeier cited in 'Raketenabwehr', 2007) And whilst European security should be conducted by Europe, 'the transatlantic alliance should not be weakened in that process.' (Steinmeier cited in 'Raketenabwehr', 2007). As a result, Merkel pursued a policy that would urge the US and Russia as well as NATO to discuss issue on BMD directly and within the NATO framework (Merkel, 2008).

It is also possible that Berlin did not want to pick a fight with other major allies as long as it remained the major opponent of Georgia and Ukraine's NATO membership bid. In 2008, Germany's foreign policy came under increasing pressure from Eastern European states as well as Washington because of Berlin's reluctance to instantly commence the Membership Action Plan for Ukraine and Georgia (Rice, 2012: 674). At the same time, changes in leadership and foreign policy preferences among other major European powers meant that Berlin's openness towards Russian security needs lost support. The inauguration of President Sarkozy together with France's partial reintegration into NATO's military structures meant that Paris would further shift towards endorsing the US foreign policy outlook (Rubin, 2008: 106), while the British government had pursued a closer policy with Washington in the field of missile defence from the early 2000s onwards (Kamp, 2014, pers. comm.). Thus, Berlin's ties with Russia threatened to expose it to serious frictions with its major allies (Szabo, 2009). In contrast to other policy areas, it is also possible that Germany's power to influence US policies remained low. In fact, there was little doubt among German policymakers that the US would eventually push ahead with the third site irrespective of German scepticism (Rodionov, 2009: 36).

Europe's Role in US and Russian BMD policies

Influence on US Policies

Washington's missile defence policy was likely influenced by multiple considerations. As was argued above, the consolidation of Washington's sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and the long-term containment of Russia was one factor for the US administration. Second,

along the lines of the unilateralist foreign policy outlook, there was also the desire to circumvent complicated discussions within NATO and with Russia. In fact, Pifer alleged that the Bush administration chose a 'short-cut' to the third site, dealing with Poland and the Czech Republic on a bilateral basis as opposed to working through NATO, because criticism of some 'Western' European NATO members and the need for alliance consensus could have delayed the project (Pifer, 2014, pers. comm.). According to Bauer and Baumann, 'it was highly unlikely that the project would have reached such an advanced stage if the missile defense plans had been developed with a NATO framework from the outset.' (Bauer and Baumann, 2007: 9)

At the same time, the decision to deploy missile defences on European soil increased Washington's dependence on the consent of Poland and the Czech Republic. To this end, the shifts in Poland's missile defence diplomacy came as a surprise for US policymakers. According to Roberts Gates, the increasing opposition to US plans in Warsaw and Prague and the requests for additional security guarantees was complicating US policies (Gates, 2014, loc. 2968). As Gates maintained, 'our presumptive partners for missile defense in Europe were stiff-arming us.' (Gates, 2014: 2962) According to Thielmann, the increasing complications in US-Polish negotiations on missile defence bases undermined the Bush administration's policy of pursuing a 'coalition of the willing' (Thielmann, 2014a, pers. comm.). The increasing doubts in Warsaw and Prague as to whether the third site would elevate the security concerns in both states delayed the eventual conclusions of bilateral agreements on the third site. At the same time, 'the US', Kulesa recalls, 'was certainly not pleased as Washington understood that [Poland's additional quests for enhanced US engagement] would be a very different involvement than the third site because the Patriot batteries would have a direct link to the Russian threat.' (Kulesa, 2014b)

Domestic opposition to Washington's BMD plans was partly based on considerations regarding the appropriate approach to Washington's European NATO allies. In May 2007, the House of Armed Forces Strategic Subcommittee voted for the cutting of the budget of the third site, whilst introducing the funding of an independent study to examine the impact the site would have on Washington's European allies (Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 2007: 2). It directed the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State:

To submit a report to Congress by January 31, 2008, to include how the administration will obtain NATO support for the European GMD proposal, and how other missile

defense capabilities such as Aegis and THAAD could contribute to the missile defense protection of Europe (Hildreth and Eck 2008).

By requesting a thorough study of all possible missile defence options for Europe, significant NATO involvement, approval by the Polish and Czech governments, and a certification from the Secretary of Defense that the two-stage interceptor to be placed in Poland ‘has demonstrated, through successful, operationally realistic flight testing’ before funds can be authorised for the acquisition or deployment of operational missiles for the European site, the Democrats imposed significant restrictions on the Bush administration’s plans (Hildreth and Ek, 2009: 19).

Faced with budgetary constraints on third site development, it is likely that the Bush administration had to turn towards a more compromising stance on missile defences in its approach to the Eastern European allies as well as more sceptical NATO states. As Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, John Rood, maintained, the Congressional pressure ‘[presented] issues for us in our discussions [...] at a time when the NATO allies have responded so positively to our recent discussion’. (Rood in Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 2007: 24) Moreover, there was also awareness that Russia’s open hostility to the third site has ‘done some damage to our standing in Europe’, as Congressman Edward Royce argued (Royce cited in Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 2007: 4).

The Bush administration sought to counter the pressure in different ways. First, Washington attempted to find a middle path between Polish requests for additional US support for Poland’s military programmes whilst seeking to limit concessions to Warsaw’s request. As argued above, the US administration was initially opposed to Polish plans to seek additional cooperative efforts from Washington. A cable from the US embassy in Poland expressed Washington’s willingness to compromise, but also set limits to Polish actions:

We may be able to close some of the gaps between our plans and the Poles expectations with time and focus and patience [...] Prime Minister Tusk [...] sold the BMDA to the Polish public as enhancing Polish security because of the Patriot agreement [...] we will want to be careful not to stumble into this chasm (‘WikiLeaks cables’, 2010).

Edelman suggested that if Poland could present a persuasive rationale for assistance then the US would be open to discussing the problem (‘Visit of Under Secretary of Defense Eric Edelman to

Prague', 2007). However, US officials denied Poland the transfer of PAC batteries as long as Poland was unwilling to pay for them. Moreover, officials in Washington rejected binding documentation of the US-Polish alliance and enhanced cooperation efforts because it would be 'difficult to conclude in the current political climate'. ('Missile Defense and Polish Military Modernization plans', 2008) On the other hand, the US commitment to the deployment of a rotating PAC battery meant that the US was predisposed to finding compromises as long as Poland would go along with the third site plans. The US commitments also heightened the pressure for any future US administration on committing to missile defence systems in Poland and therefore contributed to the US administration's desire to foster closer ties with Warsaw (Shirano, 2008).

The criticism of NATO member states that felt side-lined by the US decision was met with enhanced efforts to meet European demands for a more inclusive system that would take the security of South-Eastern NATO states into consideration. In a meeting with officials from NATO member states, Edelman stressed that NATO's security must be indivisible and that both Europe and the US needed to be protected from missile attacks ('Allies react positively to U.S. Briefing on Missile Defense', 2007). The elevation of missile defence talks to the level of the alliance not only aimed at getting states like Germany behind US proposals, it was also pivotal for domestic support of the third site in the Czech Republic and later in Poland ('Visit of Under Secretary of Defense Eric Edelman to Prague', 2007). However, the Bush administration saw the NATO talks on enhanced efforts on missile defence as a parallel effort, along with the continuation of bilateral talks with Poland and the Czech Republic, and aimed at circumventing exercising of veto powers by more sceptical allies ('Iraq/Afghanistan/Missile Defense: USD/P Edelman, A7S Boucher, and D/NSA O'Sullivan brief Allied Permreps', 2007).

Moreover, the Bush administration also enhanced its cooperative actions on missile defence towards Russia. As discussed above, there were various rationales for seeking a more compromising line with Russia, but the insistence of some European NATO states on finding cooperative outcomes with Moscow might have contributed to the Bush administration's more compromising line (Fried, 2007a). However, whereas officials in the Bush administration were quick to highlight the integrative character of the NRC, the US policy agenda suggested that Washington was neither willing to give the majority of the alliance nor Russia a veto power over the stationing of GBI batteries and radar facilities in Europe.

For Russia, the US side-lining of important European US allies was a major factor in Russia's missile defence diplomacy. Public statements by Russian officials suggest that Moscow was aiming to get European states behind Moscow's agenda to restrict or defer Washington's third site plans. As Lavrov argued, the third site:

Would [...] be an affront to all Europeans, as it would devalue the continent's pan-European and multinational organisations – including NATO and the European Union – which we were told until just recently were the keystones of European security (Lavrov, 2007a)

On another occasion, Lavrov maintained that:

It turns out that the policy of containment was targeted not only against Russia, but also against Europe as one of the potential centers of the new world order [...] Many people in Europe are rightly concerned that the deployment of elements of the U.S. National Missile Defense will have negative global consequences for the disarmament processes (Lavrov, 2007b).

Likewise, at the Munich Security Conference Putin maintained 'who needs the next step of what would be, in this case, an inevitable arms race? I deeply doubt that Europeans themselves do.' (Putin, 2007) Moscow officials also sought to draw Germany towards a more forceful opposition to US missile defence policies. As Lavrov stressed, 'does the past imperative of ensuring the U.S. presence in Europe, while excluding Russia and blocking Germany's rise, remain valid?' (Lavrov, 2007b).

As the US-Polish Patriot deal was again seen as primarily designed to thwart Russian influence in Europe (Lilly, 2014b, loc. 4625), it appears likely that Russia aimed at countering a perceived decrease of influence by drawing multiple NATO states onto Moscow's side to discuss missile defence issues. Donaldson et al. have argued that Russian strategists reasoned that an all-out opposition to Washington's missile defence plans – including a moratorium on the CFE Treaty and the termination of the INF Treaty – could have undermined a pro-American consensus in Europe. Moreover, the authors assert that a US rejection of Russian cooperation could have created a 'backlash' among European allies, 'if for no other reason than it would have countered Russia's threat to retarget its missiles to Europe if Bush's plan went along.' (Donaldson et al., 2014: 392–393)

Various factors, however, also contradict a conscious Russian strategy to 'divide the alliance'. As Ivanov highlighted, Russian perceptions and actions were based on Washington's conduct alone (Ivanov, 2014, pers. comm.). Similarly, Topychkanov noted that there was a realistic assessment among Russian foreign policymakers that Russia would have very limited influence on US-Polish relations (Topychkanov, 2014, pers. comm.). In addition, as Arbatova highlighted, the 'wedge strategy' did not present a viable option for Russian policymakers because NATO was in fact already divided over US missile defence policies (Arbatova, 2014, pers. comm.). Russian officials also remained adamant in stressing the elevation of Russia in the trilateral security dialogue, and not to separate Europe from the US. As Lavrov maintained:

Trilateral interaction in international affairs between the United States, Russia and the EU could be a practical formula for preserving the integrity of the Euro-Atlantic space in global politics. I am deeply convinced that the current problems of the European Union, and European politics in general, cannot be solved without constructive and forward-looking relations with Russia that are based on mutual trust (Lavrov, 2007b).

On another occasion, Lavrov maintained that:

The discussion of common European security issues [...] highlights the importance of the joint assessment of threats and challenges in the Russia-NATO Council in order to prepare collective measures to neutralize them without any damage to strategic stability ('Moscow seeks missile defense talks in Russia-NATO council', 2007).

In addition, Russian officials regarded Moscow's policies as being merely reactive to outside threats. The repeated mentioning of deploying Iskander missiles near Polish borders, for instance, was seen as a defensive response to Polish-US aggressions (Buzhinsky, 2014, pers. comm.). Tsypkin found that Russian diplomacy primarily derived from the willingness to demonstrate that 'Russia has risen from its knees' and was therefore 'hardly conducive to methodical implementation of great power strategies' (Tsypkin, 2009: 794).

Irrespective of Russia's diplomatic manoeuvres, the impact of Russian opposition on European policymaking remained marginal. In Germany, Moscow's suspension of the CFE Treaty as well as the questioning of the INF Treaty was taken seriously and perceived to undermine German security (Adomeit, 2012). As such, Russian opposition to the third site potentially increased Berlin's willingness to promote a NATO-wide dialogue that would be more likely to respect Moscow's fears and slow down the decision-making process on the third site. On the other hand, Berlin's influence remained limited and based on the desire to strengthen NATO unity

through promoting an integrated BMD system, whereas other major European states such as France and Spain were either ‘agnostic’ or ‘lacked sufficient interest’ in the third site debate, as one German diplomat argued (German diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.). Amongst the Polish public, Russia’s opposition initially contributed to widespread opposition to the Polish government’s adherence to the third site. However, the Polish public backed the third site plans as long as Poland would see enhanced security through additional US commitments. Russia’s rhetoric might have contributed to an increase in the confrontational Polish negotiating position towards Washington, but a potential Polish termination of third site plans was undermined by the outbreak of the Georgian War.

The Impact of the Third Site on NATO-Russian Relations

It could be argued that US missile defence policies had two broader effects. First, it devalued the NATO-Russia Council by first circumventing its influence and then by constraining US-Russian agreements because of Eastern European opposition to US transparency plans. Second, US missile defence plans heightened the geostrategic antagonism between NATO and Russia. Nevertheless, because the missile defence dispute was primarily based on US-Russian antagonism, the European-Russian relationship was arguably only slightly affected. In fact, Russia remained interested in strengthening NATO Europe’s voice within the alliance and in fostering a more inclusive European security approach, thereby trying to reverse Washington’s side-lining of NATO in the missile defence field. According to Ivanov, Russia regarded BMD policies as largely stemming from American policymakers and did not consider European states – with the exception of Poland – as pushing for a more hostile relationship with Moscow (Ivanov, 2014, pers. comm.).

At the same time, US missile defence policies increased Moscow’s wariness of alleged ‘hidden agendas’ of the US. Officials regarded the introduction of missile defence as yet another way to divide the European security space. As Putin maintained, Washington’s missile defence policy potentially originated in a conscious division of the continent ‘to ensure that we carry out [...] retaliatory measures [...] to prevent a further rapprochement between Russian and Europe.’ (Putin, 2007c) For multiple Russian policymakers, Moscow’s choice lay either in toning down its rhetorical protests (a strategy that was deemed unsuccessful in the early 2000s) or in voicing protest, which would then be interpreted as Russian aggressiveness (Ivanov, 2014, pers. comm.).

At the same time, the bolstering of US-Polish ties by means of missile defence was interpreted as an endorsement of openly anti-Russian policies that sought to further deflect the alliance's development from becoming a political institution as envisioned in the 1990s. According to Pikayev, for Russia, Warsaw's aimed at playing the role of Washington's 'Trojan horse' in European institutions and 'is pursuing the US line in order to slow down European integration.' (Pikayev, 2009: 89) In fact, Polish-Russian actions were based on the premise that both regarded the third site as anti-Russian in purpose. As Thielmann pointed out, 'the Russians and Poles were in an agreement that it was all about them, and not about Iran.' (Thielmann, 2014a, pers. comm.)

US diplomats, in turn, regarded Russia's endorsement of NATO as well as the cooperative actions as a means to defer the US deployment decision. US officials assessed that Russia's prevalent aim was to halt bilateral US negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic ('A/S Rood Missile Defense Talks with Russia in France', 2007). US missile defence disputes also increased the tendency to interpret the manoeuvres of the other side in strongly negative terms. For instance, whereas the US publically announced its understanding for Russian concerns, according to a leaked cable, Under Secretary of Defense Edelman alleged that Russia's reaction to US missile defence plans was based on an attempt to seek offensive capabilities at the expense of the INF Treaty, whilst trying to restrain the US from deploying missile defences. Moreover, Edelman maintained that it would be a mistake to give Russia a veto over the conduct of former Warsaw Pact states ('Visit of Under Secretary of Defense Eric Edelman to Prague', 2007).

At the same time, the inclusion of Eastern European allies into US missile defence policies also complicated US-Russian compromises on BMD transparency regimes. As shown above, whereas US Secretary of Defence Gates was adamant to re-assure Russia through enhanced transparency measures, Poland and the Czech Republic's unwillingness to accept Russian observers on Polish and Czech soil helped to undermine initial US-Russian actions. Whilst the rejection of a stationing of Russian military personnel was primarily rejected from domestic reasons, the Polish veto deprived the US and Russia of the possibility of seeking enhanced trust building over missile defence. As Undersecretary of Defense, Edelman, stressed, Washington's Eastern European allies reduced half of the former proposals ('Viewing cable 08USNATI, USD/P Edelman, Counselor Cohen Update NATO Sec Gen', 2008).

Likewise, the US willingness to agree to additional security guarantees towards Poland and the plan to station rotational short-range missile defence systems on Polish soil heightened the suspicions among Russian officials. According to Donaldson and Noguee, the US-Polish agreement on stationing the Patriot missiles in Poland confirmed voices inside Russia that argued that US missile defence policies had always been directed against Russia (Donaldson and Noguee, 2009: 374–375). Kosachyov, chairman of the Duma Foreign Affairs Committee, alleged that the Patriot battery deal ‘is this kind of agreement, not the split between Russia and United States over the problem of South Ossetia, that may have a great impact on the growth in tensions in Russian-American relations’. (Shanker and Kulish, 2008) Missile defence disputes also ingrained the narrative of Russian ‘division’ strategies of the transatlantic alliance, thereby fostering threat perceptions of the Cold War era. Poland’s Deputy Defence Minister Waszczykowki maintained that Russian policies were informed by ‘the desire to drive a wedge between Allies.’ (‘Allies react positively to U.S. Briefing on Missile Defense’, 2007)

The marginalisation of ‘old’ NATO member states did not strengthen alternative forums for voicing a more independent European foreign policy. In fact, the European Union’s stance on missile defence policies in 2007 and 2008 reflected a lack of competence of the European Union in traditional national defence fields. The unambitious role of Europe in dealings related to BMD undermined a more powerful disarmament agenda of multiple Western European states. As Sakwa argued, acting as ‘willing accomplices to American actions [and] to act as nuclear and conventional pedestals for American power, has rather undermined EU claims to be a community based on normative values.’ (Sakwa, 2008: 256).

Another consequence of the missile defence row was the devaluation of the NATO-Russia Council and Russia’s increasing hostility towards the mechanisms of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture (Fernandes, 2009: 2–3). Despite the commencement of discussions in the NATO-Russia Council in 2008, the actions did little to smooth mutual hostilities. Instead, mutual suspicions were directly carried into meetings. Condoleezza Rice described NATO-Russia Council meetings as highly contentious. As Rice remarked, ‘[the] Eastern Europeans [...] sometimes treated the Russians in a manner that bordered on ridicule, which made me uncomfortable.’ (Rice, 2012: 577) In turn, according to Roberts, Russia’s at times hostile rhetoric mixed with concrete statements of threats towards Washington’s Eastern European allies reinforced suspicions and covert hostilities regarding the conduct of Moscow’s foreign policy (Roberts, 2014, pers. comm.). According to Roberts, a result of Russian rhetoric in NRC

meetings was that the incentives for the US to smooth Moscow's concerns decreased (Roberts, 2014, pers. comm.). Discussions in NATO-Russia Council meetings, moreover, often resembled a 'united NATO front' that would engage in actions with Moscow, in spite of the differences among NATO allies, Kamp argued that 'NATO states met prior to NRC meetings to discuss a stance on the issues so that Moscow would face a unified opinion and would not be able to divide the alliance over missile defence.' (Kamp, 2014, pers. comm.) From Moscow's perspective, the NRC eventually contained Russian influences in relevant strategic decisions such as missile defence and NATO enlargement (Rodionov, 2009: 37). As Lavrov maintained:

If the alliance is unviable as a collective security organization, and if it is turning into a cover for unilateral measures that detrimental to our security, then what is the point of our relations with it? Where is the added value of the NATO-Russian Council then? (Lavrov, 2007c)

At the same time, however, US missile defence policies also triggered frictions within the alliance. A US official complained about additional Polish demands by sarcastically stating that 'as usual in MD-related talks with Poland, Polish remarks quickly turned to hardware transfers.' ('Missile Defense and Polish Military Modernization plans', 2008) Likewise, whereas US diplomats were publically praising Germany's missile defence policies, Edelman suggested that Berlin's stance on missile defence policies were less reliable and would 'stem from both a lack of information and from domestic political concerns.' ('Visit of Under Secretary of Defense Eric Edelman to Prague', 2007) According to Podvig, who attended several NATO meetings in his capacity as a military expert, the atmosphere in official meeting between some Western European member states and delegates from Poland and the Czech Republic were 'extremely tense.' For some of the old member states, Poland and the Czech Republics policy on BMD was tantamount to saying that 'article five of the alliance is essentially worthless.' (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.)

Moreover, despite the agreement at the NATO Bucharest Summit in April 2008, various European NATO states remained doubtful as to why Europe should commit to any meaningful cooperation with the US if Europe would be eventually excluded from decision-making processes regarding command and control structures in an alliance-wide missile defence system (Kamp, 2014, pers. comm.). Noetzel and Schreer have thus argued that missile defence contributed to the development of a 'multi-tier' alliance that threatened to trigger a process of 'disintegration' (Noetzel and Schreer, 2009). Contrary to plans in which BMD was seen as the foundation for a closer and more intimate relationship, divergences between the US on the one

side and Polish and Czech preferences on the other side fostered suspicions and mutual complaints. According to Polish and Czech officials, the US government too often failed to take the domestic difficulties of the Polish and Czech government into consideration. The deputy Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic, Pojar, stressed that the on-site inspections of US negotiators during the 2006 parliamentary elections, as well as the formal offer to launch negotiations on the day the Topolánek government won a 'tough vote' on confidence were 'insensitive' ('Czechs raise "Alarm" on U.S. Defense Site in Europe', 2007).

Similar strategic divergences were also prevalent in Polish-German relations, even though such differences did not translate into open antagonisms or a split within the alliance's official postures. Polish policymakers remained deeply sceptical about a general disarmament climate in Berlin and German attempts to change Poland's perceptions on Moscow (German diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.). Germany's pacifist attitude was regarded as a danger for Polish security, whilst suspicions about Germany's foreign policy preferences deepened (Waszczykowski, 2014, pers. comm.). A German diplomat, in turn, complained that the Polish governments claimed to 'always be right about the "Russian mindset" [...] Germany has its own experiences with Russia. As such, we were seeking to follow a more differentiated policy vis-à-vis Russia.' (German diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.)

Nevertheless, at the same time US missile defence policies remained only marginally controversial as long as Washington would pledge to provide security for the alliance. A leaked cable from US Ambassador to NATO, Victoria Nuland, claimed that the alliance solidarity was from the outset of the 'missile crisis' in 2007:

Broad on the need for Alliance solidarity, especially in discussions with Moscow [...] Compared to the usual thrust-and-parry of NAC discussions, Allied responses [to the third site announcement] were strikingly positive. Not a single critical comment was voiced ('Allies react positively to U.S. Briefing on Missile Defense', 2007).

Whereas this description might have deliberately downplayed scepticism by the allies and fails to account for persisting sceptical attitude among European states, Nuland's assessment might have signified that European NATO states did not regard missile defence as an immediate security challenge for Europe and were unwilling to risk intra-alliance confrontations.

Conclusion

Throughout the mid-2000s, the row over missile defence in Europe coincided with a competition over the rightful interpretation of the post-Cold War European order that both Poland, the US, Germany and Russia aimed to shift into their respective directions. As such, missile defence policy preferences reflected the broader foreign policy directions of Russia (circumventing the consolidation of NATO infrastructure in Eastern Europe), Poland (undermining agreements between NATO and Russia that deprived Warsaw from the desired further military security guarantees), the US (consolidating its leadership role in Europe), and Germany (preserving the spirit of a multilateral, less militaristic posture between NATO and Russia whilst fostering conventional and nuclear disarmament).

Whereas Washington's missile defence policies initially caused frictions; the third site did not cause an open rift between alliance members. In contrast to NATO enlargement, missile defence was regarded as a less imminent security threat to Russia. For central European NATO states, the overall relationship with NATO allies and the inclusion of Europe into the US plans remained more important than the endorsement of Russian opposition to US plans. As such, Europe's influence on US-Russian missile defence policies remained marginal, thereby manifesting its conceptual and strategic weakness in the area of security and defence policies. Despite the centrality for conventional and nuclear arms control for multiple European NATO members, Europe's role was limited to attempts that pledged for a more unified NATO policy.

At the same time, the US missile defence system undermined a more coherent Euro-Atlantic security outlook that was, however, irrespectively ingrained in the post-Cold War European security structure. Similar to the early 2000s, Russia's diplomatic strategy was likely based on fostering a stronger role of NATO to complicate unilateralist US prerogatives in European security policies. Whilst these action increased antagonisms, it nevertheless signalled that Moscow was willing to continue to cooperate with the alliance as long as Moscow perceived 'old' Europe as willing to partially endorse Moscow's viewpoint. Moreover, whereas US-Polish negotiations on the third site threatened to accelerate a more anti-Russian military policy by Poland, the diplomatic interactions have also revealed that Washington was not interested in explicitly antagonising Russia through an all-out endorsement of Polish defence plans. Likewise, the fact that Poland eventually halted a swift third site agreement constrained the unilateral

outlook of Washington's European leadership role, thereby serving as an example of the limits of Washington's unilateralist agenda throughout the 2000s.

Chapter 7

US-Russian Missile Defence Diplomacy 2009-2013

Introduction

This chapter argues that US BMD did not have major disruptive affect on US-Russian relations despite the fact that BMD turned from an alleged stepping-stone in bilateral relations to a visible rhetorical bone of contention. Whereas the US and Russia cooperated on nuclear disarmament and policies on Afghanistan and Iran despite unresolved BMD disputes, the actual impact of BMD was rather that it failed to prolong the US-Russian reset by means of military-to-military cooperation. Nevertheless, diplomatic encounters and the role of Europe in BMD policies further aggravated Russian and American policymakers and contributed to a downturn in bilateral relations after 2011.

During the presidency of Barack Obama, missile defence shifted into the centre of US-Russian relations. Through cooperative efforts, both sides aimed at turning US ballistic missile defence from a decade-old stumbling block into a stepping stone of bilateral relations. However, after an initial rapprochement in the field of missile defence, different strategic aims in missile defence cooperation overshadowed broader US-Russian relations. Because of the differing desired outcomes behind missile defence cooperation (Russia: altering the European security architecture in its favour; US: attempting to sustain Moscow's cooperation with Afghanistan and Iran) and the continuation of US plans to station missile defence components in former Warsaw Pact states, overtures on missile defence fell short of sustaining the 'reset' and partially reversed the 'nuclear détente' of 2010.

The shifting of missile defence cooperation into the centre of the US-Russian 'reset' policy ultimately fell short of high expectations because of complications in the details of military-to-military cooperation. In addition, both sides continued to employ cooperative rhetoric without being willing to seriously compromise on prerequisites deemed to be central for enhanced cooperative efforts. Secondly, substantial contentions over the consolidation of NATO's military presence through deployments in Eastern Europe remained in place. Missile defence policies remained mired in broader bilateral misgivings. Third, neither administration could overcome the influence of domestic interest groups, thereby leaving both with little room for manoeuvrability. The impact of missile defence on the US-Russian relationship lay in the

perpetuation of Cold War legacies, an increase in mutual suspicions, and the continuation of geostrategic rivalry. Cooperation on the most pressing security issues at that time, such as the curbing of Iran's nuclear programme, remained untouched by missile defence disputes. However, the US-Russian nuclear arms control and disarmament agenda might have been affected by on-going differences regarding missile defence sites in Europe.

The chapter begins with a description of events and continues with an interpretation of the US-Russian 'reset'. To contextualise missile defence in broader US-Russian relations, the chapter then describes US and Russian foreign policy aims from 2009 to 2013. The section furthermore aims to interpret the various efforts of the US and Russia in the field of missile defence. The subsequent section will analyse why cooperation on BMD eventually fell short of expectations. Before concluding that rows over missile defence negatively affected the relationship in various fields, it will be argued that other areas remained by and large unaffected by the missile defence dispute.

Chronology of events

Missile defence overtures between the US and Russia in the period from 2009 to 2013 can be categorised into three different phases. In 2009, in line with the overall development of bilateral relations, both the US and Russia markedly improved their understanding on the issue of missile defence. In 2010 and 2011, the US 'NATOised' missile defence by including the alliance in cooperative endeavours with Russia. In this period, US-Russian missile defence overtures shifted from a more cooperative approach to a confrontational stance. Whereas cooperation had previously stood at the centre of US-Russian deliberations, the Russian side now requested enhanced transparency measures from Washington. From the end of 2011 onwards, missile defence disputes developed into a confrontational bone of contention, thereby affecting the continuation of the US-Russian bilateral nuclear disarmament agenda and the US-Russian 'reset'.⁹

The inauguration of the Obama administration promised to alleviate some of the US-Russian obstacles in the field of missile defence. The US administration maintained that it would review

⁹ The 'NATOisation' of the Obama administration's ballistic missile defence policy at the NATO Lisbon Summit in 2010 meant that discussions on BMD were at times interchangeably conducted in bilateral US-Russian and also NRC meetings (Vershbow, 2014). In contrast to the previous two case studies, this chapter will therefore discuss the chronology of European-Russian-US missile defence overtures.

plans to deploy BMD systems in Europe to take the 'broader security context of Europe, including relations with Russia into consideration'. (Cited in Hildreth and Ek, 2009) At the same time, the US administration – like its predecessor – voiced an interest in cooperating with Moscow on missile defence. These overtures were embedded in the broader nuclear disarmament framework of the Obama administration that sought to significantly decrease Russian and American nuclear arsenals (Baker, 2009). Russian Prime Minister Putin hailed the scrapping of the third site plans as a 'correct and brave' decision (Levy and Baker, 2009). Russian officials announced that they had halted plans to deploy short-range Iskander (SS-26) ballistic missiles to the area of Kaliningrad as a result of a change in United States missile defence policy in Europe ('Russia halts deployment of missiles to Kaliningrad', 2008). However, throughout 2010 and 2011, cooperative overtures ran into difficulties. On-going differences surrounding the role of BMD in the framework of the New Start Treaty led to rhetorical confrontations over missile defence (Kyl, 2010: 10324). Russia continued to link missile defence talks with the future Russian nuclear weapons modernisation programmes, and negotiations on limitations of the militarisation of space (Petrov, 2009).

In September 2009, the US announced that it would discontinue the plans for the third site and instead contended that Washington would embark on a European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA). The EPAA delayed the contentious deployment of long-range missile interceptors in Eastern Europe to 2020 (phase IV) (The White House, 2009). Simultaneous efforts to renew cooperative efforts with Russia on ballistic missile defences included the creation of a 'Defense Relations Working Group' for US-Russian discussions on defence policies as well as for exchanges of threat concepts stemming from missile proliferation. The conducting of studies on territorial missile defence cooperation, the cooperative use of radar installations and data exchange centres in Russia, and the revival of joint early warning centres were additional actions through which the US aimed at reversing the negative dynamics in the field of missile defence (US Department of Defense, 2010: 34).

At the same time, Washington promoted an intensification of mutual theatre missile defence exercises as part of the NATO-Russian cooperation. NATO's 2010 Lisbon Summit Declaration affirmed that the alliance would invite Russia to jointly explore the potential for linking current and planned missile defence systems at an appropriate time in mutually beneficial ways (NATO, 2010). As NATO Secretary General Rasmussen maintained:

The more [...] missile defence can be seen as a security roof in which we all have a share, the more people from Vancouver to Vladivostok would know that they were part of one community. One community, sharing real security, against a real threat, using real technologies (Rasmussen, 2010).

NATO also declared that the missile defence system would not 'be directed against Russia' (NATO, 2010). NATO's overtures were based on the premise of two different systems that could be linked through two joint missile defence centres, one for the detection of early warning, and the other one for the support of the planning process. Moreover, policymakers envisioned the resumption to joint theatre missile defence computer simulations. Another initiative, put forward by Russia in 2010, was a joint planning and operations centre within NATO to provide a venue for implementing transparency measures, exchanging updated threat assessments, and discussing possible attack scenarios (Pifer, 2012: 19; Vershbow, 2014).

However, both Washington and NATO's cooperation proposals and the subsequent discussions fell short of Russian expectations. A key condition for Russian participation remained its full-scale integration into any early-warning and defence system and involvement in decision-making and operation of the system, not only the provision of data. As Lavrov highlighted, referring to US cooperation proposals, 'we are only invited to help with our resources, to carry out the US design.' (Lavrov cited in Kozin, 2013: 222) The Russian side also complained that NATO would not pursue discussions with Russia over potential engagement rules (Kozin, 2013: 117).

The central difference of both sides' approaches emanated from Washington's lukewarm response to Russia's cooperation proposal of a 'sectoral approach' shortly after the 2010 NATO Lisbon Summit. The sectoral approach envisaged that Russian missile defence capabilities deployed in the West of the country would protect both Russian territory and areas of neighbouring NATO states and adjacent sea areas against missile strikes. Russian and NATO components were to be managed under coordinated algorithms and rules of use, and activities to be coordinated from a common control centre. In practical terms, this meant that Russia would be responsible for the interception of missile aimed at parts of Eastern Europe (Giles and Monaghan, 2014: 20–22; Kozin, 2014, pers. comm.).

As cooperation efforts stalled – the NATO BMD Action Plan of June 2011 did not mention Russia at all – Moscow increasingly focused its efforts on complaints about the military threats to its nuclear deterrent (Kozin, 2013: 117). In November 2011, Medvedev announced that Russia would be able to destroy European missile defence sites and ordered the Russian military

to enhance penetration technologies for Russian missiles to overcome missile defences (Medvedev, 2011b). According to Zadra, at the 2012 Missile Defence Conference in Moscow Russian generals stressed that with the mix of US space dominance and rapid global strike capabilities, a global missile defence system would fundamentally undermine the Russian deterrent (Zadra, 2014b, pers. comm.). Moscow also pushed for legal assurances, guaranteeing that European components of missile defence would not be directed against Moscow. Such guarantees were likely to mean the creation of a set of organizational and technical measures in terms of numbers, deployments sites, technical characteristics, radar sites, and the speed of interceptors, thus limiting missile defence deployments (Kozin, 2013: 228).

Disputes also emerged over Washington's reluctance to accept Russian requests for a legally binding agreement that would put limits on US missile defence developments. In 2011, the US and NATO reaffirmed that they would only be willing to grant Russia political guarantees that US BMD was not directed against Russia. The Obama administration rejected limitations on US developments. As Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance, Rose, highlighted:

The United States has made it clear that no nation or group of nations will have the veto power over US missile defense efforts because missile defense is a critical capability needed to counter a growing 21st century threat to the United States, our allies and partners, and our deployed forces. Likewise, under the terms of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, NATO alone will bear responsibility for defending the Alliance from the ballistic missile threat (Rose, 2011).

Whereas the US favoured a 'more coordinated' effort to missile defence policies with Russia, Russia insisted on a 'broad consensus' that NATO and Russia should implement before both sides could move on to more detailed discussions (US diplomat (b), 2014, pers. comm.). At the same time, according to Zadra, whereas Russia endorsed the elevation of theatre missile defence exercises to simulations on territorial defences, it criticised Washington's cautiousness on accelerating the pace of cooperative efforts after the US had argued that practical TMD cooperation would be a 'premature step'. (Zadra, 2014b, pers. comm.) Moscow also criticised the secretiveness of US diplomacy despite US efforts to grant Russia a greater role in observing US missile defence developments ('Russia Dismisses U.S. Antimissile Test Proposal as Propaganda', 2011).

Washington's scrapping of the contentious fourth phase of the European Phased Adaptive Approach in 2013 did not alleviate Russian concerns (Sokov and Pomper, 2013). Instead, the open-ended nature of the US BMD deployments remained a contentious issue. Washington's reluctance to discuss a legally binding commitment that BMD would not be directed against Russia and the lack of information exchange about the targeted states of US BMD further irritated Russian diplomats (Lindstrom, 2012: 12).

US-Russian Relations, 2009-2013

This section interprets the 'reset' between Russia and the US from 2009 to 2013 and analyses reasons for its ultimate failure by analysing the US and Russian foreign as well as nuclear and missile defence policies. A clearer definition of the 'reset' allows for a better understanding of the role of missile defence in the broader framework of the US-Russian rapprochement.

Numerous analysts have maintained that the 'reset' in US-Russian relations after the War in Georgia significantly smoothed the relationship after a period of conflict (for the most comprehensive overview of the US-Russian 'reset': Deyermond, 2013). Its major accomplishments were the enhancement of cooperative efforts on dealing with NATO's Afghanistan operation and Iran's nuclear programme as well as the conclusion of a comprehensive arms control and disarmament treaty (New Start: NST). Russia's eventual accession to the World Trade Organisation promised to facilitate the integration of Moscow into the global economic institutions (Stent, 2014, loc. 4934).

In light of these developments, Karaganov et al. concluded that 'a threat to systemic confrontation [in US-Russian relations] has almost disappeared.' (Karaganov et al., 2011: 3) Such interpretations of the reset, however, tended to overlook the fact that the fields of cooperation were limited to areas in which US and Russia interests coincided (Trenin, 2012). Missile defence, the Middle East, human rights policies, state sovereignty, the post-Soviet sphere, contrasting views of world order the 'values gap' in areas such as political freedoms, transparency, and the rule of law remained contentious issues (Deyermond, 2013: 515; Nation, 2012: 7; Rojansky and Collins, 2010). The 'reset' also failed to provide a 'strategic goal' in the US-Russian relationship (Karaganov et al., 2011: 3). Once the rapprochement through enhanced cooperation in area of mutual interests ended, the 'reset' crumbled (Deyermond, 2013).

Domestic and international developments accelerated the degeneration of the 'reset'. First, the inauguration of Vladimir Putin in 2012, which followed widespread demonstrations against Russia's political elite, enhanced US-Russian clashes over the development of Russia's domestic path (Stent, 2014: 253). Second, NATO's Libyan intervention and the subsequent regime change in Tripoli in 2011 deepened ideological and philosophical differences over concepts of sovereignty and democracy ('Russia's Syrian stance', 2012; Felgenhauer, 2011; Stent, 2014, loc. 4866/9916). Third, instead of sustaining the nuclear rapprochement, which US President Barack Obama had branded the 'cornerstone' of US-Russian relations, Russian and American diplomats disagreed on the desirability of entering yet another round of nuclear reductions (Klein, 2013). The US Congress remained deeply sceptical of any renewed US disarmament effort, whilst election cycles in the US and Russia complicated a more comprehensive approach by the two executives. According to Stent, the 'reset' was also undermined because both sides could not advance a more satisfactory framework for European security (Stent, 2014: 260).

US Policy on Russia

Whereas the foreign policy of the Obama administration shifted the focus from a more unilateral management towards assigning primary importance to collective action by the international community, Karaganov et al. have highlighted that Obama's approach was not primarily based on an 'altruistic' policy of overcoming the world's disorder, but on a different means for implementing the US agenda on a global scale after the economic crisis of 2008 (Karaganov et al., 2011: 14). Whereas the Obama administration was willing to significantly improve the security dialogue with Moscow, it preserved the general post-Cold War US outlook towards the European security space. In his foreign policy formulations, Obama remained under on-going pressure from an ambivalent public and congressional gridlock (Edwards, 2012).

Obama's pragmatic approach towards Russia primarily came from a substantially different attitude to nuclear matters. In contrast to its predecessor, the Obama administration maintained that a stable nuclear relationship based on parity and mutually assured destruction is desirable. Through overtures in terms of nuclear disarmament, the administration sought to gain Russian support in a limited number of areas such as counterterrorism, the stabilisation of Afghanistan, non-proliferation efforts towards North Korea and Iran, and arms control (Deyermond, 2013: 508). Throughout the first years in office, the Obama administration decreased Washington's

rhetorical support for Georgia and Ukraine's NATO accession and moderated its tone on Russia's domestic developments (Deyermond, 2013: 511).

At the same time, pragmatic overtures were constrained by domestic factors that severely limited a potentially more benign and lasting rapprochement (Deyermond, 2012). Domestic criticism of Obama's 'reset' with Russia was based on opposition to weakening ties with Washington's Eastern European allies to the benefit of US-Russian relations, as well as general hostility towards entering into another arms control treaty with Russia. Partially as a result, Obama's approach to Russia suggests that the White House did not seek a 'revolution' in US-Russian affairs, but rather based its limited engagement on the temporary weaknesses of the US economy. In fact, despite such pragmatism, US policies endorsed previous principles of the Bush administration such as a generally positive attitude to NATO enlargement (Donaldson et al., 2014: 404). Vice President Biden maintained that 'we will not recognize any state having a sphere of influence.' (Cited in Cohen, 2011) National security advisor on Russia, McFaul, highlighted, 'we're going to see if there are ways we can have Russia cooperate on those things that we US officials at times also reverted to criticism of Russia's domestic developments.' (McFaul, 2009) In January 2011, Barack Obama personally condemned the jailing of the new US-anointed Russian 'democratic leader', Boris Nemtsov, a former high-level Yeltsin-era official (cited in Cohen, 2011).

US Nuclear and BMD Policies

The Obama administration came into office with a strongly negative view of the unilateral counter-proliferation policies of the George W. Bush administration. Instead of aiming to manage nuclear proliferation issues unilaterally, US Democrats sought to revive the multilateral approach of the Clinton administration. Obama had a highly positive attitude towards another strategic arms reduction treaty with Russia, the US ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime (Spear, 2011).

For the Obama administration, bilateral nuclear disarmament was embedded in a broader strategic vision in which the US would become the multilateral leader in non-proliferation efforts, decisively taking a step towards a 'nuclear free world' (Obama, 2010). In line with the Obama administration's support for a reconfirmation of the strategic balance with Russia, US officials hailed the New Start Treaty as a 'move beyond Cold War mentalities and [a means to] chart a fresh start in our relations with Russia'. (Gottemoeller, 2010) The Obama administration

hoped that the signing of the New Start Treaty (NST) might launch further discussions around an elimination or reduction in tactical nuclear weapons in Europe (Schlesinger, 2010 in Senate Armed Services Committee). The administration's priorities were reflected in significant changes in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The 2010 NPR argued that 'building more stable strategic relationships with Russia and China could contribute to greater restraint in those countries' nuclear programs and postures, which could have a reassuring and stabilizing effect in their regions.' (Department of Defense, 2010) The Obama administration also explicitly endorsed cooperation with Russia and China on global non-proliferation efforts.

Nevertheless, whereas Obama voiced scepticism towards nuclear-related deterrence strategies and the effectiveness of missile defences in countering regional threats, Obama's actual policies also rested on preserving counter proliferation strategies of the George W. Bush administration (US Department of Defense, 2010: 11–12). It posited that Washington should attempt to refrain from the possibility of entering a mutually assured destruction (MAD) relationship with North Korea and Iran. This policy goal constrained Washington's nuclear 'reset' agenda with Russia and its manoeuvrability on BMD-related deployment questions (Betts, 2013). In fact, Obama officials argued that the threat from Iran would warrant an earlier deployment of missile defence systems than was envisioned by the Bush administration (Hildreth and Ek, 2009: 5). Mayer thus maintained that the US BMD rationale to 'retain freedom of action and avoid nuclear coercion' has been preserved by Obama (Mayer, 2011).

The decision to scrap the third site in Europe was primarily based on deficiencies in the GBI interceptor technology (The White House, 2009: 201). In May 2009, an EastWest Institute study argued that the threat from Iran was not imminent, and that the third site in Europe would be ineffective against an Iranian ballistic missile threat (Hildreth and Ek, 2009: 9). In June 2009 a fact sheet prepared by the staff of the House Armed Services Committee emphasised that the third site would not be able to provide any capabilities against Iran's ballistic missile inventory (House Armed Service Committee, 2009).

The US approach thus shifted from long-range interceptors for the protection of US territory to focus on short-range and medium-range interceptors to counter regional threats, whilst it continued to hedge against potential future ICBM threats (for a more detailed discussion of the Obama EPAA plans: Lindstrom, 2013). The emphasis on a sea-based system allowed for a more distributed and better networked system that would increase the flexibility of deployment and

the survivability of the defensive shield. Through EPAA, the US defence ministry aimed to give the system more flexibility in terms of technological developments and threat assessments.

Whilst the Obama administration eliminated and cut spending on the Multiple Kill Vehicle (MKV) and kinetic energy weapons respectively, the budget for missile defence remained roughly equal to the one of George W. Bush (approximately \$10 billion per year) (House Armed Service Committee, 2009). This together with the large quantities of Aegis ships to be deployed with interceptors (38 by 2015, 90 by 2020 as envisaged by the Department of Defence) and the willingness to pursue long-range defences (that could theoretically be directed against China and Russia) led Futter to the conclusion that Obama's missile defence policies were equally ambitious to previous plans (Futter, 2012). In fact, the BMD Review Report by the Department of Defense supported an expanded international effort for ballistic missile defence (US Department of Defense, 2010: 11–12). The US administration argued that US troops in Europe and European allies would be protected by 2011, sooner than was the case under the third site approach (Goure, 2012; however, Kreienbaum reiterated that Phase three and four remained from the outset a 'mere speculation': Kreienbaum, 2012).

In conclusion, the policy of the Obama administration accepted a nuclear deterrence relationship with Russia, whilst seeking to slowly transform the relationship with Moscow towards one with a diminished role for nuclear weapons through a transformative role of US-Russian MAD relations by including Russia in a joint BMD project. However, the continuation of the counter-proliferation doctrine towards 'rogue' states undermined Washington's manoeuvrability towards Russia and China. Measured by the scepticism of various officials in the Obama administration with regard to missile defence, US efforts fell short of expectations.

A core explanation for this is the domestic setting in the US, which put constraints on nuclear and BMD policies and the US-Russian 'reset'. (Spear, 2011) In 2009, US conservatives picked the New Start Treaty and US missile defence policies as a major battlefield in their opposition to Obama's 'reset' with Russia.¹⁰ Whereas conservatives had earlier justified their dissatisfaction with Cold War arms control approaches because of their cumbersome verification processes, the Congressional opposition now came to criticise the Obama administration for failing to include sufficient verifications mechanisms in New Start (Romney, 2011). Whereas the Bush

¹⁰ Other fields of criticism included the abandonment of democratic values in US-Russian relations, alleged concessions towards Russia regarding the sanction regime on Iran, the neglect of Ukraine and Georgia as valuable US allies, and the general 'appeasement' towards Russia.

administration had only reluctantly agreed to enter the Moscow Treaty in 2002, voicing its disinterest in Moscow's reciprocal disarmament steps, the Republicans defied the New Start Treaty on the basis that it would not get the US 'anything in return' from Russia (Barrasso, 2010). As a result of the forceful and widespread criticism of NST, the bilateral arms control treaty's entry into force was delayed for seven months by the U.S. Senate, the longest ever period of hearing on an arms control treaty (when it was eventually ratified, moreover, it was by the narrowest margin of any bilateral arms control treaty in U.S. history - 71 to 26; Mattox, 2011: 107).

Criticism of the Obama administration also extended to the US approach on missile defence policies. Critics of the NST argued that its linkage between offensive and defensive weapons systems would give Russia 'a vote on our strategic defenses' (Bond, 2010: 8052). Moreover, BMD cooperation would 'introduce powerful new opportunities for espionage against us, as well as a greater understanding of our defense capabilities and weaknesses', as Senator Mark Kirk reiterated (Kirk, 2010). Obama's BMD policies were also severely criticised because the cancellation of the third site was interpreted as an abandonment of key US allies that had given permission to the installation of the system despite great domestic opposition. In an open letter to Obama, former officials such as Elliot Abrams urged Obama to:

Honour the deep and principled connections that have bound the United States and the nations of Central and Eastern Europe since the time of Woodrow Wilson. The EPAA was interpreted as a 'capitulation' to Russian pressure (Abrams et al., 2009).

In April 2011, thirty-nine Republican Senators cautioned the Obama administration about granting Russia undue influence over the U.S. missile defence programme, demanding that the Obama administration should not give Russia access to classified US information, including:

Data on ballistic missile early warning, detection and tracking systems, their telemetric data, data on radar installations and sensors or a general operative picture of the situation in the world and to US kinetic missile defense technology ('GOP Senators Wary of Russian Influence on European Missile Defense', 2011).

Deyermond argued that the critique regarding Barack Obama's nuclear and BMD policies cannot solely be explained through opposition to the nuclear arms control approach. Instead, the Republican challenge to Obama's 'reset' policy must be seen in the framework of partisan demands in domestic politics 'in which all aspects of the contemporary Russian state are seen as antithetical to American national interests and political values', thereby reflecting the shift from a

‘realpolitik’ outlook of the Grand Old Party towards a widespread ‘ideologisation’ of foreign policy (Deyermund, 2012: 68). Moreover, as was the case in the 1990s, Cold War ‘nuclear hawks’ such as Douglas Feith, Undersecretary of Defence of Policy under the George W. Bush administration, continued to inform the debate among Conservatives in the US establishment. The approach of the first Reagan administration in fact continued to play a central role among US Republicans in formulating its opposition to the Obama administration’s nuclear policy (Goldgeier, 2009).

As a result of the domestic climate and the upcoming 2012 presidential campaign, the Obama administration remained constrained in both its cooperation overtures as well as in its attempt to smooth Russian concerns through transparency measures, only presenting to the Russians a proposed executive agreement on missile defense transparency in spring 2013 (Pifer, 2014, pers. comm.). In fact, Trenin alleged that the Obama administration’s discussions on nuclear matters were more challenging in Washington D.C. than the bilateral talks with Russia (Trenin, 2011). John Isaacs from the Arms Control Association maintains that the manoeuvrability in terms of any significant cooperation was severely restrained by limits imposed by Congress on US-Russian technological cooperation (Isaacs, 2014, pers. comm.). Similarly, Futter argued that the Obama administration came to power with the desire to decrease US BMD funding and to relegate the importance of the programme, but domestic pressure essentially elevated the US ballistic missile defence programme to a strategic priority. These circumstances meant that ‘Obama presided over a continuation, and in some cases expansion, of the BMD programme that he had inherited, despite it appearing to undermine wider policy agendas.’ (Futter, 2011: 215)

Proposals by the US Defense Department for missile defence cooperation with Russia were developed to ensure that sensitive technology would be neither shared nor compromised (Wallander, 2012). The opposition to ambitious cooperative approaches and transparency measures was reflected in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 that alleged that cooperation should be pursued ‘in a manner that safeguards classified information’ and prohibited funds ‘from being used to provide the Russian Federation with sensitive missile defense information that would compromise U.S. national security in any way, including “hit-to-kill” technology and telemetry data for missile interceptors or target vehicles.’ (Levin, 2013) The limitations imposed by Congress were met with a conciliatory approach from the Obama

administration, which argued that it would ‘not compromise essential technologies. There’s no discussion of sharing hit-to-kill with Russia.’ (Wallander, 2012: 101)

Russian Foreign Policy

The initial overtures of the Obama administration were broadly endorsed in Moscow. Karaganov and other Russian analysts writing for the Valdai Club were positive, stating that the Obama policy ‘for the first time since the mid 1990s [...] does not undermine Russia’s vital interests [...] in the post-Soviet space.’ (Karaganov et al., 2011: 5) Instead, a more stable relationship with the US promised various benefits such as overcoming the division in terms of security within Europe, the modernisation of Russia’s economy, and the maintenance of ‘real sovereignty’ in international affairs (Karaganov et al., 2011: 18).

According to Rutland and Dubinsky, Moscow’s policymakers regarded US ‘reset’ policies as being driven by an understanding that the Bush administration’s policies had failed and that the US needed to rebalance its relations with Russia because of economic difficulties in the wake of the economic crisis (Rutland and Dubinsky, 2012: 257). At the same time, as Stent argues, Moscow interpreted the ‘reset’ as limited because of Washington’s desire to push ahead with missile defences in Europe, its rejection to consider a new European security treaty, and America’s support for regime change in the Middle East (Stent, 2014: 260).

The implicit premises of the Medvedev administration (2008 – 2012) continued to aim at reversing the weakness upon which Gorbachev and Yeltsin acted in international affairs, as Lukyanov stressed (Lukyanov, 2009: 129). Additionally, the desire to ‘catch up’ with the ‘West’ in economic, political and military terms remained pronounced. Moreover, as Kuchins and Zevelev have highlighted, ‘for most policymakers and elites in Moscow, old habits of measuring success or failure through a U.S.-centric prism have endured.’ (Kuchins and Zevelev, 2012: 152) At the same time, the broader strategic position of the Medvedev administration shifted away from the purely Western outlook of the early 1990s. In fact, Arbatov argued that Russia’s multi-vector foreign policy had been enhanced under Medvedev, whilst the Russian military ‘redoubled’ its suspicion about ‘Western’ intentions as evidenced by the Russian military doctrine in 2010 and military modernisation efforts. Throughout the Medvedev administration, Russia’s military technical cooperation and political overtures with China have ‘outpaced’ Moscow’s cooperative efforts in the NATO-Russia Council and with the US (Arbatov, 2013b: 320).

Russia's 'multi-vector' foreign policy became more pronounced after the re-election of Putin in March 2012. In fact, Putin argued that Russia should become a 'European power in Asia, and not a Eurasian power in Europe [...] Russia is advancing a more active integrationist agenda, distinct from the old desire to build relations with the European Union and the US.' (Sakwa, 2012) Putin maintained that the US approach to international law and NATO enlargement would destabilise bilateral relations, and also that the relationship could only improve if Washington could rid itself of 'Cold War stereotypes'. (Putin, 2012b) Whilst a 'solid economic basis' in US-Russian relations remained the focus of the Kremlin, the 2013 Russian Foreign Policy Concept reflected Russia's belief in an emerging multipolar order in which the US would become gradually weaker (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). It reiterated a more proactive foreign policy, Russia will itself seek to 'lead and anticipate events' through enhanced military and diplomatic means (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

The overall detachment from the 'West' was precipitated and largely connected to Russia's dissatisfaction with developments in the European security architecture after the collapse of the Soviet Union. According to Monaghan, Moscow continued to perceive European security as divided between a 'first-class security organisation', namely NATO, and a 'second-class' security organisation with little impact: the OSCE (Monaghan, 2011a). As the result of a deeply perceived antagonism in terms of NATO's eastward enlargement, Russian foreign policymakers maintained an overall revisionist approach to Europe's post-Cold War order. Domestically, multiple foreign policy stakeholders did not endorse an active, positively developing relationship with NATO, either because NATO was seen as the single largest threat to Russia or because it was perceived as a 'fading entity in international affairs' (Monaghan, 2011a).

The antagonistic attitudes were exacerbated by what was perceived as a rebuff of Medvedev's initiative for a new European Security Treaty in 2008. Medvedev's proposal aimed at reaffirming the territorial sovereignty and political independence, as well as the non-influence in domestic affairs and self-determination of people in the Euro-Atlantic security sphere (Medvedev, 2008a). It also reiterated the unacceptability of the use of force, whilst it stressed that no state or organisation should have the exclusive rights to maintain peace and stability in Europe (Lavrov, 2010).

Western commentators have interpreted the Russian overtures – the emphasis on international law, multipolarity, rights for the Russian diaspora, and the importance of regions of privileged

interests – as a continuation of former attempts to strengthen Russia’s sphere of influence at the expense of Eastern European post-Soviet states (Lo, 2009: 201). Critics also noted that the unspecific demands were designed to put pressure on ‘Western’ policymakers without offering concrete initial steps (Lo, 2009). Western commentators also highlighted that Russia itself remained reluctant to enter the ‘Western’ security architecture if full equality in decision-making processes with the US and its partners was not reached (Monaghan et al., 2010).

Russian officials maintained that Russia’s fall-back position in case of a ‘Western’ rejection should be a full scale re-nationalisation of Russian security (Monaghan, 2009b: 95). The Russian feeling of being unequally treated by the ‘Western’ alliance remained an on-going feature in Moscow’s reasoning regarding the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty and reforms of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). According to Foreign Minister Lavrov, NATO would have to take into account the fact that a strategic partnership with Russia would essentially mean accepting Russia as a sovereign state that asserts itself as a hub and role model for developing states (Lavrov, 2008).

Despite the increasing emphasis on Russian ties with Asia, hegemonic ambitions in the post-Soviet sphere, and misgivings about the European security structure, it is far from clear to what extent Russia pursued a strategic foreign policy (for an account of past Russian strategies and Putin’s foreign policy approach from 2012 onwards: Monaghan, 2013). In contrast to multiple accounts of American or ‘Western’ analysts who regarded Russia’s efforts to crush European aspiration in Eastern Europe as a conscious effort to re-assert Russia’s dominance, Charap and Troitskiy have argued that Moscow’s policies were ‘far more defensive and reactive’. (Charap and Troitskiy, 2013)

Nevertheless, according to Arbatova, the conflict with the US gave Putin a sense of vulnerability and disappointment that he transferred into a harder foreign policy stance (Arbatova, 2014, pers. comm.). Stent maintained that the US-Russian rhetorical clashed over the Russian presidential election process heightened Putin’s sense of anti-Americanism (Stent, 2012: 123–124). In fact, throughout the election campaign, Putin blamed US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for interfering in Russian domestic affairs, heightening his criticism of the destabilising role the US would play internationally (Putin, 2012c).

Throughout the Medvedev and the third Putin presidency, nuclear weapons remained central in Russia's military and strategic thinking. As Shoumikin argued, in light of the broader international developments, 'the Russian missile-nuclear potential became the symbol of Russia's survival as a nation state and the absolute guarantee of its security.' (Shoumikhin, 2011: 113) At the same time, Russian emphasis on nuclear deterrence continued to be defined by various wider developments such as the overall security context in Europe, opposition to Washington's 'humanitarian' interventions, as well as US missile defence deployments and Washington's long-range conventional weapons developments. The Russian nuclear deterrent also remained important as a symbol and tool for international influence. As Putin maintained, because of:

Deliberately managed chaos [and] attempts to provoke [...] conflicts [...] close to Russia's and its allies' borders [and because the] basic principles of international law are being degraded and eroded [...] Russia cannot rely on diplomatic and economic methods alone to resolve conflicts. Our country faces the task of sufficiently developing its military potential as part of a deterrence strategy. This is an indispensable condition for Russia to feel secure and for our partners to listen to our country's arguments (Putin, 2012a).

The codification of nuclear parity through the New Start Treaty was thus broadly welcomed, despite criticism from conservative strategists fearing that NST did not sufficiently limit US missile defence developments (Kozin, 2013: 212). For Arbatov, New START marked the 'resumption of legal cooperation [...] that was suspended [...] for more than a decade.' (Arbatov, 2010a: 4) It reinforced Russia's great power status, vindicated its long-standing arguments on the necessity of strategic arms control, and was economically beneficial because it allowed Russia to reduce its arsenal whilst maintaining sufficient forces for nuclear parity with the US.¹¹

From 2009 to 2013, Russia's attitude towards missile defence continued to be influenced by various domestic factors. As a result of the prevalence of Russia's military in shaping missile defence discussions, worst-case threat assessments remained prevalent (Tsypkin, 2012: 57). Additionally, the generally conservative military constituency remained important for the civilian leadership. Lilly argued that a more compromising tone on nuclear matters from the Kremlin might in fact have undermined the support of the general staff and the military constituency in

¹¹ The military and economic circumstances in 2009 meant that Russia was already below some of the treaty limits and was retiring older systems faster than it was adding new weapons. Arbatov predicted that by 2020 Russia could have as few as 350-400 deployed delivery vehicles (Arbatov, 2011: 14).

the 2011 and 2012 election cycle in Russia (the Kremlin's fear that the military constituency might decline to support Putin in the presidential elections was evidenced by initial plans of the General Staff's to abrogate deployments of travelling plans that might avert soldiers and officers from voting: Lilly, 2014b, loc. 6786/9198). The revival of the Russian defence industry, including nuclear modernisation and air defences, was a pivotal factor in Putin's re-election campaign in 2012 as it provided the additional benefit of promising to create new jobs (Lilly, 2014b, loc. 6837/9198). Moreover, the military establishment lacked incentives to contribute to the resolution of missile defence issues with Washington because US ballistic missile defence was pivotal in pushing for state investments in Russia's own nuclear and air defence sector.¹²

Russia's political leadership increasingly regarded US deployments as politically unacceptable. Referring to Moscow's unwillingness to meet US demands in the field of missile defence, Sokov maintained that it became 'easier to negotiate with the military because the foreign ministry has developed an attitude whereby any cooperation with the US is to be resisted'. (Sokov, 2014b, pers. comm.) Two observers have argued that such hostilities among the civilian leadership might be explained through the fact that missile defence played a central role in the leadership's creation of a 'siege mentality' that would '[detract] away from domestic concerns including those of the economy and the general disenchantment with the political system and ruling elites.' (Sutyagin and Patel, 2012) In fact, missile defence had by then become a domestic tool for fostering the mobilisation of the Russian population against NATO policies (Topychkanov, 2014, pers. comm.). The notion that the threat posed by missile defence in Europe served as a justification for the existence of the government (Lilly, 2014b, loc. 6900/9198) was disputed by Barabanov who argued that the Kremlin did not necessarily instigate anti-Americanism, but rather interfered with its crystallisation (Barabanov, 2007: 4).

The antagonistic attitude towards the US contrasted with assessments by Russian nuclear experts who alleged that the US EPAA would pose little threat to Russia's retaliatory strategic deterrent in the decade to come (however, the authors of the IMEMO study did not exclude that 'there may be a new missile defense crisis in the two states' relations' should the 'US unilaterally [deploy] its missile defense in Europe', Arbatov, 2010a: 43). Yet, Sokov disputed the 'manipulative' character of BMD policy formulations. Instead, he contends that the general perception among the Russian political community remained that missile defence would:

¹² Lilly argues that the aims of the MIC and the political elite coincided irrespectively, whereas Podvig maintains that the pressure from the MIC increased the willingness to invest in nuclear and BMD-related technologies (Lilly, 2014b, loc. 6872/9198; Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.).

Not threaten Russia in twenty years, but next year. It was the same with NATO expansion: Rationally, NATO might expand further five to ten years time, but Russia's elite fostered a view by which another NATO enlargement round was imminent (Sokov, 2014b, pers. comm.).

BMD assessments by the Russian establishment might have been precipitated by a general degeneration of bureaucratic professionalism (Inozemtsev, 2011). A report by Russian nuclear experts criticized the 'incompetent manner' of Russian missile defence deliberations (Rogov, 2012: 8). Yuri Salmonov, the chief designer of various modern Russian sea-based and land-based ballistic missiles, stressed that:

It is not only that the people who make [...] decisions are unprofessional, but that the people with the status to make decisions do not consider it necessary to solicit advice from experts before formulating a final decision (cited in Arbatov, 2013a: 347).

The lack of bureaucratic professionalism and various simultaneous yet contradictory approaches might also have been responsible for the general confusion over the prioritisation of policy formulations. As Arbatov alleged, 'several planes of strategic thought and foreign and military policy exist somewhat in parallel [...], which never intersect with one another and are applied inconsistently.' (Arbatov, 2013a: 124) The closed and opaque decision making processes in the Kremlin and the advancement of personal agendas might also have accelerated coordination issues in policy formulations. Topychkanov argued that various personal agendas, such as that of Dmitri Rogozin, Russia's ambassador to NATO, have played an important role in Russia's diplomatic overtures (Topychkanov, 2014, pers. comm.).

The confusion about Russia's military programmes was expressed in various uncoordinated and contradictory policy statements. One example was an event in which US experts were given a guided tour of the Russian missile defence development sites in which Russian officials endorsed cooperation, whilst a high-ranking Russian general simultaneously denied that Russia could possess a missile defence system ('Tour of Russia's Missile Defense Facilities', 2011, 'Russian expert dismisses chief's missile comments as propaganda', 2011). Arbatov argued that Russian policymakers were unable to formulate strategic outlines for Russia's own missile defence programme and remained torn between promoting Russia's indigenous efforts and cooperation with the US and NATO. For Arbatov, the two approaches were incompatible and 'doomed the [US-Russian and NATO-Russian] negotiations to failure.' (Arbatov, 2013b: 349) President Medvedev grasped the potential contradictions of advancing Russia's own missile defence

programme whilst insisting to join the US architecture when he asserted that the Russian system should ‘fit the current circumstances, and this includes settling the question of whether or not we will participate in the European missile defense system that is being created.’ (Medvedev, 2011a)

Interpreting Ballistic Missile Defence Diplomacy

Russia

Multiple underlying military and political factors remained prevalent in the formulation of Russia’s BMD policies. Russia’s conventional weakness and the ‘rapid shrinking of Russia’s nuclear forces’ throughout the 2000s combined with a low production of new missiles heightened military concerns that missile defence could turn into first-strike weapons for the US. According to the National Security Strategy of 2009, attempts of:

Leading foreign countries’ aiming at ‘achieving overwhelming superiority in the military field’ would include ‘development of high-precision, information and other high-tech means of warfare’, strategic non-nuclear, weapons for the formation of a unilateral global missile defence and the militarization of space that could ‘lead to a new arms race’ (Medvedev, 2009b).

For Russian strategists and policymakers, the EPAA continued to be regarded as directed against Russia, as the anticipated speed, number and the widespread deployment of US BMD was seen as disproportionate to the threat Iran or any other state would allegedly pose to Europe or the US (Jones, 2013).

It is likely that Russia also remained concerned about the potential of BMD to undermine the political importance of Russia’s nuclear deterrent. In fact, Sutyagin argued that Moscow’s opposition to ballistic missile defence did not come from the actual undermining of Russia’s retaliatory capabilities, but the preservation of a ‘credible’ and ‘relevant’ nuclear arsenal that would guarantee Russia’s political great power status (Sutyagin, 2011). As shown above, Russian officials considered military deterrence as a means of forcing others to ‘listen to [Russia’s] arguments’, as Putin argued (Putin, 2012a). Missile defence also continued to be surrounded by misgivings about broader US and NATO policies. The deployment of the EPAA was regarded as accelerating the division in Euro-Atlantic security without finding a satisfactory solution for Russia (Putin, 2012b). Such fears were aggravated by Russia’s sense of its own geostrategic and military vulnerability (Arbatov, 2013a: 357). In addition, US plans for global BMD deployments

continued to be regarded as a continuation of hegemonic ambitions in Washington and an encirclement of Russia (Podvig, 2014a: 9).

The deployment of NATO's military infrastructure on the territory of former Warsaw Pact member states remained an obstacle to Russian policymakers. The National Security Concept of 2010 highlighted the idea that Russia is a major external threat would stem from 'NATO's global functions, which are carried out in violation of the norms of international law, and the development of its member-countries' military infrastructure closer to the borders of the Russian Federation.' (Russian Ministry of Defence, 2010) Moreover, Arbatov concluded that psychological factors stemming from the close vicinity of US deployments continued to play a more important role in Russian military thinking than military, 'rational' factors (Arbatov, 2013a: 341).

Topychkanov believes that there might have been a real sense among officials throughout the Medvedev presidency that contended that the US and Russia might come to a solution on BMD (Topychkanov, 2014, pers. comm.). The generally cooperative and less 'anti-Western' policy of Medvedev supports this line of argument (Stent, 2014 Chapter 10). Medvedev's lack of experience in dealing with BMD-related issues might in fact have inflated his expectations regarding cooperation efforts with the US. Political observers have also highlighted that a generally pro-Western attitude amongst the conservative elite and the population supported a lasting rapprochement with the US by the end of the decade (Topychkanov, 2014, pers. comm.). The belief that NATO was going through a stage of internal crisis and that US power would decrease in light of the global financial crisis might also have fostered expectations that contended that the alliance was in need for more ambitious cooperative efforts with Russia (Giles, 2011, loc. 465/2727).

However, it is likely that fears that a more benign stance on missile defence could be turned against Russia and that consent to missile defence cooperation would give the US a free hand in deploying defences were the central factors in Russian policies. Based on the quantity of domestic and international elements that bolstered Russian opposition to the US system, it is unlikely that Russia sought to decrease its pressure on the US regarding the termination of plans to deploy missile defences on Eastern European soil. Sokov therefore argued that the more favourable rhetoric of the Medvedev administration – initially stemming from the scrapping for the third site – merely covered up an essentially unchanged strategy reflecting the willingness to

not give in to US policies (Sokov, 2014b, pers. comm.). Dmitri Rogozin, the Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for interaction with NATO on missile defence issues, argued that ‘the best guarantee of security within the framework of a missile defence project would be the absence of such a project. However, we shall not [...] be able to achieve that.’ (‘NATO should be first to offer compromise on missile defence - Russian envoy’, 2011)

In this regard, Russia’s cooperation was not based on a genuine desire to cooperate for the sake of defending Russia from incoming missiles, but rather to control developments from ‘the inside’. (Sokov, 2014b, pers. comm.) Russia’s decision to engage in US actions was, according to Mankoff, a decision ‘out of necessity’ as Moscow understood that it could not block US policies in any other meaningful way. As Mankoff argued, it accepted negotiations because it saw the Obama administration as a better negotiating partner than any future US administration that might be ideologically committed to missile defence (Mankoff, 2012: 345). According to the leaked US embassy file, Russia’s Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov stressed that Russia’s willingness to engage in any cooperative missile defence structure with Washington, ‘including JDEC’, was directly related to whether the US decided to go forward with plans to deploy interceptors in Eastern Europe (‘Missile Defense, JDEC, Non-Proliferation Negotiations Moscow, May 28, 2009’, 2009). Likewise, Troitskiy highlighted that only a US discontinuation of its missile defence programme in Europe would have fully placated Russian concerns (Troitskiy, 2013). As such, manoeuvres such as Russia’s insistence on conducting joint threat analyses and detailed technological premises for cooperation prior to substantial negotiations could be interpreted as an attempt to slow down the US deployment of missile defence system in Europe (‘Missile shield plans cause rift between US, Europe and Russia’, 2010).

At the same time, it is possible that the Kremlin’s focus was not solely based on regarding missile defence cooperation as an end itself, but rather as a means to test the ‘Western’ willingness to grant Russia a substantial role in European security affairs. Foreign Ministry spokesman Aleksandr Lukashvich stressed that European missile defence cooperation is ‘the main direction in which we are testing the possibility of moving toward an indivisible security space.’ (Cited in Mankoff, 2012: 343) Vladimir Putin remarked that ‘if we managed to achieve a breakthrough on missile defense then this, in a literal sense, would have also opened the floodgates for building a qualitatively new model of cooperation, similar to an alliance, in many other sensitive areas.’ (Putin, 2012b)

From this perspective it is possible that the valuing of missile defence cooperation was based on the long-sought establishment of a political dialogue on an inclusive and equal footing in Europe (Monaghan, 2009a: 5). After Medvedev's European security treaty proposal had been met with suspicions and open hostility among NATO member states, the sectorial approach 'transferred' important bits from earlier proposals of a European security treaty – preventing one state from taking steps to ensure its security at the expense of others as well as the reduction of NATO in exclusively managing Euro-Atlantic security – into the field of missile defence (Mankoff, 2012: 343). Russian inclusion in the US-led BMD system could have potentially limited the dominance of US influence on the European security setting (Lo, 2009).

Russia's diplomatic efforts in the field of missile defence must also be linked to parallel negotiations in the framework of the New Start Treaty. According to Litovkin, the Russian side was not willing to seriously undermine negotiations on a new strategic framework, in particular after pointing out the increasing importance of the offensive-defensive balance in New Start (Litovkin, 2013: 174). As a result of a more general support for NST and unresolved questions over BMD, Russia adopted a mixed stance towards Washington over arms control, both praising the Obama administration for its constructive approach and criticising it for inflexibility so as to include limitations on future BMD developments ('Russia-US relationship fails to reboot', 2009).

At the same time, Russia's understanding of missile defence cooperation continued to rest on full equality with the 'West' (Buzhinsky, 2014, pers. comm.), whilst Moscow's fall-back position on missile defence was, according to Mankoff, 'not the more limited cooperation Washington proposed; it [was] rather to impose constraints as the price for not making trouble.' (Mankoff, 2012: 341) As such, Russia's policies resembled Moscow's denials of simply consenting to US policies in other fields. As Putin maintained:

We intend to be consistent in proceeding from our own interests and goals rather than decisions dictated by someone else. Russia is only respected and has its interests considered when the country is strong and stands firmly on its own feet (Putin, 2012b).

As in previous Russian efforts, the insistence on full equality on missile defence cooperation was very unlikely to be met by the US. Arbatov outlined that the Russian proposal would have meant that 'millions of citizens would need to rely on the flawless performance of another state's military equipment in order to avoid being eliminated within a matter of minutes.' (Arbatov,

2013b: 318) The implementation of Russia's proposal would have also implied that the cooperative effort would go beyond any overture that the US proposed to allies such as Japan and European NATO states (Arbatov, 2013b: 318). Russia also linked transparency measures on missile defences with other fields, making it less likely to find solutions with the US. Whereas Moscow had formerly regarded missile defence in isolation to seek timely or ad-hoc compromises with the US, from 2012 onwards Russia linked the resolution of disputes to multiple other military concerns, including tactical nuclear weapons and conventional precision strike weapons. Moreover, Russia also sought a limitation in the Phased Adaptive Approach on a global scale, not just in Europe (Goure, 2012: 31). Moscow's argument that Russia should be involved in protecting parts of the NATO alliance whilst simultaneously rejecting the protection of its own territory by NATO suggests that Russia increased the preconditions for a solution on missile defence to a point at which a resolution of the disputes was unlikely.

It is thus possible that Moscow wanted to appear cooperative, as in previous cases, without actually desiring full-fledged cooperation on missile defences. As has been argued above, Moscow's overall approach under Medvedev shifted further in the direction of a multi-vector policy that was based on ad-hoc changes in Russian overtures and that was at the same time detached from long-term ties with either China or the 'West'. Official statements on the desirability of Russia's accession to NATO suggest that Russia's interests in a full-fledged security integration into the 'Western' institutions had declined (Bohm, 2010; Antonenko and Yurgens, 2010). Russia's Permanent Representative to NATO, Rogozin, argued that 'if Russia joins NATO ... it will be giving a commitment to a stranger. We will also give away some of our sovereignty and our right to be in charge of our sovereignty and our independence. On another occasion, Rogozin maintained: 'Don't you think that the threat posed by China will grow if we join NATO? Don't you think that China may not like it if the Chinese-Russian border becomes a Chinese-NATO border?' (both quotes cited in Giles, 2011, loc. 1280–1316)

As argued before, another explanation for Russia's BMD conduct could be that the domestic formulation of Russia's missile defence policies remained mired in contradictions. Russia's sectoral approach seemed 'poorly thought out', as Dvorkin argued (Dvorkin, 2013: 216). In technical terms, Russia's proposal was a non-starter, as the requirements for a joint early warning system did not allow for two separate sectors to be observed. It is possible that contradictions between endorsing full-fledged cooperation whilst at the same time remaining wary of actually

cooperating with NATO were based on the desire to integrate into NATO's missile defence whilst trying to undermine its deployment, as long as Russia could not become an equal partner.

It is also possible that Russia increasingly reverted to open attempts to block the EPAA because of the realisation that Moscow had little to contribute to a BMD system that could protect Europe. Various programmes related to Russia's air and missile defence ran into severe difficulties, making the scenario likely that 'the Air-Space Defense Force has been established, but is unable to perform its assigned missions due to a lack of necessary weapons', as Yesin argued (Yesin, 2013: 157). Another possible reason for Russia's uncompromising stance is that Moscow was content with keeping the BMD issue 'alive'. (Fedorov 2009; Roberts recalls that a leading Russian official maintained that missile defence 'is a problem better to have than to solve'. Roberts 2014, pers. comm.) In fact, existing military opinions in Russia have continuously contended that US BMD – and in particular the 'hit-to-kill' technology – presented no threats to Russia (Fedorov, 2009). Russian negotiators continued to criticise US missile defence deployments despite the cancellation of the fourth phase of EPAA, which had been the central bone of contention among Russian officials (however, Russian policymakers did in fact not regard the fourth phase as 'cancelled', but only as 'suspended': US diplomat (b), 2014, pers. comm.). As such, Podvig argued that BMD served as a convenient, yet replaceable symbol for 'evil America'. (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.) In fact, Putin himself argued that 'many countries prefer not to be straight about [US unilateralism and the US strive for "absolute security"] for various reasons [...] Russia will always call things as it sees them and do so openly.' (Putin, 2012b) US deployments could have also served as a bargaining chip in future nuclear disarmament talks or as a symbolic protest for Washington's unilateral missile defence policies. US BMD deployments might also have kept missile defence alive as a potential irritant within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which could in turn be exploited by Russia.

However, none of the experts on Russian policy contended that Russian policymakers pursued missile defence policies in a purely tactical manner. Podvig sees domestic deliberations as the main variable of Russia's policies, whereas Sokov regards the Russian efforts as being mainly defined through the willingness to halt (and not to tactically continue) US missile defence, in particular in Europe (Sokov, 2014b, pers. comm.). Russia's missile defence policy formulation also remained mired in domestic contradictions and the priorities of individual officials, suggesting that the approach towards missile defence did not follow an on-going plan to preserve a global anti-American symbol for enhancing Russia's diplomatic resolve.

Overall, Russian diplomacy can be regarded as a contradictory approach that was based on a long-sought establishment of a political dialogue on an inclusive and equal footing in Europe, but at the same time it was derived from attempts to limit US missile defence deployment in Europe. Moscow's multi-vector foreign policy outlook, the unlikelihood of substantial US compromises on missile defence cooperation and transparency measures (including an ABM Treaty-like framework), the continuation of geostrategic rationales for the US missile defence system in Europe, and Moscow's cooperation efforts that would have elevated Russia to a first-ranking ally of the US suggest that Russia was unwilling to compromise on missile defence without substantial US concessions. Moscow's diplomacy on missile defence might have reflected Moscow's broader foreign policy outlook that shifted away from cooperative economic and military approaches to the US towards an increasingly principled and ideological anti-'Western' stance (Bovt, 2013).

USA

Given the centrality of nuclear disarmament among officials in the Obama administration as well as for the president, the US aimed at shifting the hostilities that had been triggered through differences on missile defence into a cooperative undertaking. In fact, according to Mattox 'the missile defence policy shift has represented the most visible example of a change in administration policy in an effort to reach out to the Russians.' (Mattox, 2011: 108)

According to Pifer, the Obama administration reasoned that a 'reset' with Russia could foster US-Russian cooperation on issues important to the Obama White House, including strategic nuclear arms reductions, ending Iran's nuclear programme, and securing support on Afghanistan such as US military over flight rights (Pifer, 2014, pers. comm.). This approach was based on a broader approach to cooperate in fields where US and Russian interest were similar. As US vice President Biden argued, 'the United States and Russia can disagree and still work together where our interests coincide. And they coincide in many places.' (Biden, 2009) This also included the field of missile defence, which Obama himself did not initially regard as a policy field of central importance. In fact, Obama maintained that 'the real 21st century threats [were not] rogue states lashing out with ballistic missiles, but a terrorist smuggling a crude nuclear device across our borders'. (Obama, 2008)

As a result, throughout 2009, the US signalled that it would adjust its missile defence programme according to developments on discussions with Iran. Secretary of Defence Gates, postulated that ‘if there was no Iranian missile program, there would be no need for missile defence sites’. (Baker, 2009) This linking of progress on curbing Iran’s nuclear programme with missile defence deployments in Europe has led some commentators to believe that missile defence was used as a mere bargaining chip to seek US-Russian cooperation on Iran’s nuclear programme (Hynek, 2009: 6).

However, according to Roberts, Washington’s overtures towards Russia did not mean that the US was willing to decrease its commitment on missile defence if Russia would be more cooperative on the sanctions regime towards Iran (Roberts, 2014, pers. comm.). The EPAA continued to be aimed at accelerating the process of protecting Europe from Iranian missiles and the deployment of BMD systems in former Warsaw Pact states (US Department of State Bureau of Verification, Compliance and Implementation, 2010). In fact, despite Obama’s initial signalling of compromise on missile defence with Russia, Washington’s actual policies do not suggest that the US was overtly willing to meet Russian demands. First, the Obama administration maintained an uncompromising line in New Start negotiations and firmly rejected Russian requests for a more explicit linkage between offensive and defensive weapons systems. According to a US member of the American New Start negotiations team, US officials consistently stressed that there was little room for compromises on an ABMT-like regime (US diplomat, 2014, pers. comm). Second, despite allegations to the contrary, the Obama administration eventually failed to link the rapprochement with Iran with the EPAA. This move contrasted earlier statements that pointed to the Obama administration’s flexibility on missile defence matters should the missile threat decrease. In May 2009 the Executive Director of the Missile Defence Agency, David Altwegg, argued:

As long as the threat from Iran persists, we intend to go forward with a missile defense system that is cost-effective and proven. If the Iranian threat is eliminated then the driving force for missile defense construction in Europe at this time will be removed (Altwegg, 2009)

In 2014, however, Alexander Vershbow defended the European Phased Adaptive Approach by maintaining that it would not be ‘directed against any country [and that] the problem of ballistic missile proliferation will remain as pressing as ever.’ (Vershbow, 2014) As Brad Roberts maintained, ‘given the existence of an Iranian missile capability against much of Europe, there

has never been any question but that phases 1-3 would be fully implemented, whatever happened to the Iranian programme.’ (Roberts, 2014, pers. comm.)

The deployment of missile defences in Eastern Europe (Romania in 2015 and Poland in 2018) remained a central policy aim of the US (Collina, 2010). As such, bolstering European security remained the central focus of the adaptive approach irrespective of Russian complaints. Moreover, despite the cooperative rhetoric on US-Russian missile defence systems, Washington remained hesitant to grant Moscow a central role in European security architecture (Mankoff, 2012: 343). As discussed below, the reluctance to foster a more cooperative approach was based on constitutional limitations to sharing missile defence technology and to ceding political control over the interception facilities.

In addition, as has been argued above, Washington remained adamant about giving in to Republican requests to keep transparency measures on a level that fell short of Russian demands. It is likely that a more antagonistic stance also threatened to undermine the fragile consensus in Washington on other issues such as nuclear negotiations with Iran (Isaacs, 2014, pers. comm.). As such, the Obama administration remained reluctant to oppose Congress on a highly contentious issue. It is likely that the New Start Treaty ratification would have been a far more contentious issue if the Obama administration had been willing to meet Russian demands on missile defence. Thus, in 2010, the Obama administration staunchly defended its missile defence policy. As Gates argued:

The Treaty will not constrain the U.S. from developing and deploying defenses against ballistic missiles, as we have made clear to the Russian government. The US will continue to deploy and improve the interceptors that defend our homeland (Gates, 2010).

The US administration thus defied demands by Russia for a more global, legally binding missile defence regime (Arbatov, 2013a: 351). Lastly, the US remained committed to valuing counter-proliferation strategies more highly than potential rapprochement with Russia (Gates, 2010).

The elevation of the importance of BMD can also be interpreted as an attempt to divert the Russian aim to move a new European Security framework into a less challenging channel for US foreign policymaking. For the US, as Secretary of State Clinton argued, missile defence cooperation represented a shortcut that would avoid ‘a very long and cumbersome process’ of developing a new European security treaty along the lines of Russian proposals (Clinton, 2010).

As Mankoff has highlighted, '[BMD] cooperation offered a way to address concerns about Russia's role in European security without requiring major concessions on the part of the US or a major redesign of European institutions.' (Mankoff, 2012: 343) The deflection of Russian criticisms of the European security order in the area of missile defence reflected the administration's unwillingness to question central premises of NATO's role in Europe.

It is also possible that the overhaul of US missile defence in Europe offered a 'cheap' signal that Washington was ready to seek compromises with Russia. Experts within the US stressed that the technological flaws of the Bush administration's GBI technology had determined the scrapping of the third site. The cancellation of the fourth phase in early 2013 was again less of a concession to Russia, but rather a reflection of technological realities. In fact, according to Mankoff, the fourth phase was 'hopelessly ambitious' from the very outset. The fact that the Obama administration was initially pursuing it regardless meant that the US prioritised soothing domestic and allied considerations over Russian concerns (Mankoff, 2012: 343).

It is also possible that the security demands of Eastern European allies who were deprived of the third site influenced Obama's missile defence policy formulation. By the end of the internal BMD review process, the Obama administration sought to strengthen the protection of Europe through BMD deployment programmes, arguably because of pressure from various NATO allies. The broadly criticised decision to cancel the third site 70 years after the Soviet invasion of Poland at the start of the Second World War hardened the Obama administration's commitment to BMD deployment in Poland. A more ambitious cooperation design with Russia also ran the risk of being blocked by criticism among Washington's post-Warsaw Pact European allies, fearing an overall abandonment of US security guarantees in light of a US-Russian rapprochement (Hynek and Stritecky, 2010).

Finally, it is likely that the Obama administration also acted on the premise that a more forthcoming stance on missile defence would either be unnecessary or futile in light of Russia's principled opposition to US missile defence, in particular as long as missile defence would not stand in the way of agreeing on further bilateral disarmament treaties. According to a US diplomat, the US thought that Russia would ultimately consent to the exclusion of missile defence from New Start because the Kremlin had done so under Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Putin (US diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.). This offered the Obama administration the chance to counter domestic scepticism by rejecting Russian claims to link the offensive-defensive relationship more

closely to nuclear arms control. It is also possible that Russia's rejection of linking progress on Iran's nuclear programme with missile defence decreased the value of missile defence as a bargaining chip. In 2010, the substantial sanctions against Iran approved by the United Nations Security Council meant that Washington no longer needed to regularly assuage Russia.

Given Obama's scepticism on missile defence on the one hand, and the staunch support for accelerating the process of global missile defence policies on the other hand, it is not clear whether the Obama administration's policies followed a clear strategic plan. In fact, various actions of the US administration suggest that policies remained ad-hoc and at times contradictory. One such contradiction was the increasing importance of BMD in US military planning and the nomination of missile defence sceptic Philipp Coyle to become the top White House senior adviser (Rogin, 2009). Plans on the inclusion of Russia in a process of two separate systems that would be connected through a data exchange centre and operational compatibility centres remained vague. One possible reason for this vagueness was the lack of bureaucratic capacity to draw out a more concise plan, as Mankoff argued (Mankoff, 2012a, pers. comm.). Another contradiction remained the aforementioned signalling of linking resolutions on Iran's nuclear programme with US missile defence deployments. As mentioned before, the Obama administration did eventually refrain from changing the course on missile defence policies despite improvements in the talks with Iran. It might also be the case that the simultaneous willingness of the Obama administration to soothe Russian concerns put missile defence cooperation at the centre of enhanced cooperation efforts within NATO and meeting Republican demands resulted in an incoherent policy that was prone to failure from the outset (Mankoff, 2012).

In light of the centrality of nuclear-related issues to the continuation of the 'reset' and Obama's personal dedication to nuclear reductions, it appears likely that the Obama administration was willing to come to a rudimentary understanding with Russia, but that considerations regarding the domestic power arrangement and the security of NATO allies remained more important (Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Complicance, 2011). The opportunities regarding Aegis-based and SM3-based technologies, the threat estimates with regard to Iran's missile and nuclear programme and domestic constraints in combination with the security commitments to Eastern European allies eventually superseded concerns about Russia's consent to NST and Moscow's more general opposition to ballistic missile defence. As Arbatov maintained, '[i]t was clear that the United States intended to implement the program on its own and would be

satisfied if Russia would give its political agreement not to obstruct the process.’ (Arbatov, 2013a: 351) The inclusion of Russia as an equal partner in the conduct of European security would have meant a significant reversal of the post-Cold War security architecture in Europe that the Obama administration was neither willing, nor able, to pursue. As a result of emerging differences between official rhetoric and actual policies, Indyk et al. have observed that:

There was inevitable tension between Obama's soaring rhetoric and desire for fundamental change, on the one hand, and his instinct for governing pragmatically, on the other. The history of the Obama administration's foreign policy has [...] been one of attempts to reconcile the president's lofty vision with his innate realism and political caution (Indyk et al., 2012).

Reasons for Failing Cooperation Efforts

As has been argued throughout the thesis, in the post-Cold War era American and Russian leaders regularly attempted to establish more cooperative efforts in the field of missile defence. Whereas much of the cooperative rhetoric was based on diplomatic gambits to reach short-term foreign policy aims, there were nevertheless also fundamental obstacles that both sides needed to deal with. Whilst this chapter argues that missile defence cooperation efforts were not based on the sincere desire to compromise in this particular area, the broader technological and political limitations to military-to-military cooperation was another factor in failed efforts. State-to-state military cooperation requires a degree of trust that makes it subject to multiple challenges (Glaser, 1997). This lack of trust – together with bureaucratic inertia, differences over data sharing and command and control arrangements, and the technological asymmetry of US and Russian technologies – was a major underlying factor why cooperation efforts failed.

Exchange of Sensitive Technological Data

Analyses of the cooperative efforts in the framework of the Russian-American Observation Satellite (RAMOS) throughout the late 1990s have shown that both sides were wary of transferring sensitive technology to each other (Feiler, 2003; for more details see Samson, 2007). As has been argued above, domestic constituencies – in particular the US Congress – at times remained adamantly opposed to any data sharing agreement. Changes to export restrictions would have been subject to enhanced domestic scrutiny and therefore remained highly contentious (Rhinelanders cited in Hearing of the International Security, Proliferation and Federal Services Subcommittee of the Senate Governmental Affairs, 1999).

These issues were not only confined to US-Russia cooperation. In fact, the history of the German-Italian-American Medium Extended Air Defense (MEADS) reveals various underlying issues in relation to technology transfers among missile defence partners. Throughout the cooperative efforts, German and Italian companies could not participate in advanced technological developments in the project because of restrictive US export laws. Software developments were under US control and explicitly excluded German and Italian companies from cooperation (Kubbig, 2005b: 24–25). In a study on MEADS cooperation in March 2005, the German Federal Court of Auditors maintained that the character of the cooperation has changed from a notion of mutually beneficial technology transfers towards the mere sale of America's most advanced technologies to Italy and Germany. The report argued that there were substantial technology-based security restrictions, which the United States continued to insist on (Bundesrechnungshof, 2005). Cooperation also ran into difficulties because of an 'overwhelming US dominance' in both the application of US law and the imbalanced allocation of key posts, as Kubbig argued (Kubbig, 2005b).

Technological Asymmetry

Another impediment to significant US-Russian cooperation was the fact that the asymmetry in missile defence technology developments could not substantially benefit from Russian systems. As a result, the American military-industrial complex's incentives for cooperating on key components – interceptors, radar technologies, and sensors – or incorporating Russian technologies in a joint system remained limited. Whereas various experts have highlighted that Russian short-range and intermediate-range interceptors could be incorporated into a NATO-Russian or US-Russian system (Ivanov et al., 2012), experts on BMD-related technologies have doubted whether Russia could have contributed any substantial technology (Sokov, 2012). Whereas the Russian military-industrial complex initially endorsed cooperation efforts to gain access to resources, throughout the 2000s the Russian military-industrial complex also developed an interest in portraying US BMD developments as a threat to Russia's security in order to generate funds for Russia's indigenous defence procurements (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.). This shift in priority was based on an increasing scepticism regarding the possibility of gaining access to cutting-edge technology in light of both realities in Russia and the diverging foreign policies of the two states (Arbatov, 2013a: 354–355).

The ‘technological asymmetry’ factor would only have been decisive if both systems were to have been extensively integrated or if Russia were responsible for covering some NATO territory (as favoured by Moscow under the Medvedev administration). A study by the Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative (EASI) in 2011 has maintained that missile interceptors and command and control centres should have remained separate, while jointly staffed NATO-Russian ‘cooperation centres’ could receive data and information about missile launches and flight trajectory (Ivanov et al., 2012). In the study, Russia’s contribution was thus based on missile defence information tools, mainly through Russian radar installations facing southwards (Trubnikov, 2011: 21–22). Nevertheless, there are doubts whether Russian contributions to early warning capabilities could have enhanced existing US capabilities (Stukalin, 2011). Sokov maintained that shared early warning cooperation would have had a minimal effect on US missile defence systems (Nikolai Sokov, 2010: 129). The 2010 US Ballistic Missile Defense Review called for the use of Russian tracking data, but maintained that the US system would ‘not be dependent on that data’. (US Department of Defense, 2010)

Command and Control

Another serious obstacle to more ambitious cooperation related to ongoing issues over command and control infrastructures. Including Russia into decisions to intercept incoming missiles would have meant the overhaul of NATO’s command and control structures. Moreover, it threatened to put the cohesion of NATO into question (NATO diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.). Some of NATO’s Eastern European member states have been particularly outspoken in their rejection of Russia involvement in a common command structure (Noetzel and Schreer, 2009). Commentators have also highlighted that the decision to include Russia in the intercepting process could have slowed down the decision making process in case a third state attacked European territory (Paul, 2012: 5). A system in which Russia would neither gain access to US technology, nor have influence on the command and control structure, however, has made Russia extremely sceptical about the value of any cooperative effort. As Lavrov complained in 2010, the US would simply tell Russia that ‘these are the systems we plan to develop, and you will have to contribute your radar installations.’ (‘Lavrov: Russia not ready to set up missile defense shield together with U.S.’, 2010) In addition, Russia for its part refused to grant the US the right to intercept missiles aimed at Russia partly because the Russian military feared that this provision could also include the interception of Russian missiles (Kozin, 2013: 223). However, as Zadra, Head of the NATO-Russian Missile Defence Cooperation Group,

highlighted, ‘you cannot have a cooperative missile defence system without a common command and control structure.’ (Zadra, 2014b, pers. comm.)

Exchange of Data in Real Time

Both the Clinton and Obama administrations supported an advanced mechanism of data exchanges on missile launches. For this purpose, joint centres were to be built in which both sides could have exchanged data and information (US State Department, Bureau of Verification, Compliance, and Implementation, 2000). However, such data exchange would not have taken place in real time. Instead, information was to be filtered through national systems. Yet, as Steinbrunner maintained, this provision decreased the intrinsic value of the cooperation because quick decision-making in times of a nuclear crisis would have run counter to prior filtering of launch data through national systems (Steinbrunner, 2001: 8).

Also, as long as US-Russian relations fell short on a long-term, stable framework, any crisis situation could have made a launch surveillance system subject to national manipulation (Steinbrunner, 2001). If elevated to a real-time exchange, in turn, the US and Russia could have potentially lost various nuclear strike options against one another. A breakthrough in real-time data exchange would therefore have had the potential to reverse some aspects of the principle of mutually assured destruction. This ran counter to deeply embedded nuclear targeting policies in US and Russian bureaucracies (Cimbala, 2005). As Arbatov highlighted, ‘neither the American nor the Russian military establishments are sure how a joint missile defense system would fit into the tried and tested system of mutual deterrence.’ (Arbatov, 2013a: 356)

Iran & China

Apart from significant political barriers to enhanced cooperation efforts, diverging foreign policy priorities were another impediment to more significant cooperation. Since the early 2000s, US missile defence plans have been based on fears related to Iran’s nuclear programme. A stable cooperative effort with Russia would therefore have depended on Moscow’s willingness to see a nuclearised Iran as an equally threatening scenario (Arbatov, 2013a: 353).

However, while Russian policymakers have stressed the destabilising character of a nuclearised Iran, in particular from 2009 onwards, differences between Washington and Moscow’s perceptions of Iran remained. Russia consistently questioned Washington’s focus on regional

adversaries, and in particular the US focus on Iran as a main driver for international terrorism (Mankoff, 2012: 342). US objections over Russo-Iranian ties have at times increased suspicions in Moscow that the US seeks to undermine Russia's economic interests to pursue its own unilateral grand design in the region (Orlov and Vinnikov, 2005; Ivanov, 2014, pers. comm.). In recent years, the increasing cooperation on opposing Iran's nuclear programme, discussed below, did not mean convergence on concepts of nuclear deterrence, threat estimates, geostrategic interests, or strategies and tactics to deal with Iran.

Likewise, the US and Russia estimated the repercussions on China with regard to joint US-Russian approaches on missile defence fundamentally different. Initially, criticism of US BMD plans featured prominently in Beijing and Moscow's rapprochement throughout the 1990s and 2000s (Tyler, 2001b). At the same time, China's opposition to a US-Russian rapprochement on BMD decreased Moscow's willingness to seek cooperation on BMD with the US and NATO (Arbatov, 2013b: 327). However, the Sino-Russian alliance against US missile defence changed during the US-Russian rapprochement in 2001 and 2002 as Vladimir Putin started to argue that US BMD would pose no threat to the Russian Federation. Weitz argues that this came as a blow for Chinese leaders, who perceived Russia's turn as a 'betrayal' to Russian-Sino rapprochement (Weitz, 2012). Sokov asserts that Russia was subsequently unwilling to share missile launch data from China with the US (Sokov, 2010: 124). Likewise, Victor Yesin, advisor to the commander of the Strategic Missile Forces of Russia, stressed that cooperation with NATO in the area of strategic nuclear missile defence had adverse effects on Sino-Russian relations (Trubnikov, 2011: 9).

In sum, in the post-Cold War decades, the major stumbling block of missile defence cooperation after the Cold War has been that limited cooperation efforts have generated too few incentives for the respective parties, whilst an inclusive and comprehensive system offered too many sweeping changes in the bilateral relationship (Sharavin, 2010). A full Russian incorporation into the missile defence shield (or data exchanges in real time) might not only have reversed the deeply ingrained principle of mutually assured destruction, it also had the implicit potential to reverse the post-Cold War order in which Russia remained only loosely attached to the transatlantic security regime (Donaldson, 2013).

An inclusion of Russia would have significantly changed the dynamics of NATO as it would have given Russia a greater say in European defence affairs and would have brought the pre-

eminent role of the US in Euro-Atlantic security affairs into question. Missile defence cooperation could not play its alleged transformative role as long as the overall relationship remained undefined and in flux and both sides were unwilling to enter a more sustainable relationship. As Arbatov stated, ‘neither the political elites, not the military strategic or governmental circles in the Western countries or Russia had been prepared for [...] a rapid [...] and purposeful military and political rapprochement between the sides.’ (Arbatov, 2013b: 320)

Impact of BMD on the Broader Relationship

Whereas the previous section aimed at identifying the diplomatic aims of Russia and the US on BMD and analysed the reasons for the mutual antagonisms and failures of BMD cooperation after the Cold War, the following section aims at interpreting the impact of BMD disputes on the bilateral relationship from 2009 to 2014.

Iran & Middle East

Various policymakers have given the impression that the US offered a tit-for-tat compromise to Russia in which Moscow could enhance its cooperative approach on circumventing an Iranian nuclear weapons programme in return for Washington’s cancellation of the third site (‘Romney, Gingrich at GOP debate’, 2011). Experts also linked Russia’s reluctance to supporting US policies on Iran as long as BMD-related issues remained unresolved. Rutland and Dubinsky have maintained that there was a direct link between Russia’s reluctance to sanction Iran in 2009 and the American willingness to push ahead with the third site plans of the Bush administration (prior to announcement of EPAA) (Rutland and Dubinsky, 2012: 255). In fact, towards the end of 2008, there were indications that Russia might go ahead with a contentious S-300 air defence missile deal with Iran if the US remained unwilling to scrap the third site. Leaked cables show that Russian diplomats threatened to ‘re-assess’ the suspension of the S-300 delivery to Iran ‘should the United States continue to pursue missile defense plans in Poland and the Czech Republic.’ (Miles, 2013) Moreover, coinciding with increasing antagonism in terms of BMD from 2012 onwards, Moscow accelerated its criticism of ‘Western sanctions’ on Iran (Stent, 2014, loc. 4592).

However, the actual impact of US missile defence was far more modest than the allegations and leaked cables indicate. The fact that Russia supported UNSCR 1929 in June 2010 (prior to the US and Russian ratification of New Start) demonstrates that the unresolved issue of BMD did

not have a substantial impact on Moscow's policies. Throughout 2013, Iran and Russia continued to be engaged in a legal conflict concerning Moscow's rejection to deliver the S-300 defence systems, despite the fact that the US had by then rejected linking Moscow's cooperative efforts with its BMD deployment policies ('Iran Mulls Replacement for Russian S-300 Missile System', 2014). Russia also remained interested in the ambitious aims of the Geneva P5+1 negotiations with Iran despite the lack of progress in missile defence negotiations with the US. Differences on dealing with Iran's nuclear programme remained based on divergent strategies, but the aim to keep Iran denuclearised was shared by both parties (Mattox, 2011: 110).

Disarmament and Arms Control

US-Russian missile defence disputes did not significantly affect nuclear disarmament and bilateral arms control efforts. However, the failure to enter yet another round of bilateral post-New Start arms control negotiations in 2013 could have been partly based on the unresolved issue of missile defence. In addition, missile defence likely contributed to disputes over the INF Treaty as well as the removal of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. At the same time, the likelihood of a military competition over missile defence and nuclear modernisation remained low and nuclear disarmament continued.

With regard to the conclusion of the New Start Treaty in 2010, missile defence at times complicated the negotiation process, but did not effectively undermine the eventual conclusion of the treaty. As argued above, there are various indications that Russian officials were satisfied with the conclusion of the New Start Treaty despite Washington's insistence on having a free hand in missile defence developments. Moreover, as one of the chief negotiators of the US delegation argued, in NST negotiations both sides were surprised about the degree of which both sides were willing to compromise on long-held arms control priorities (US diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.). In addition, the Obama administration's policies in the offensive nuclear arena were explicitly couched in concepts of mutually assured destruction and BMD development (whilst maintaining the level of the budget of the George W. Bush administration) and fell short of the ambitious programmes of the US under the Reagan administration.

At the same time, it is possible that Russia rejected US efforts to enter in yet another post-New Start arms control negotiation round because of Washington's refusal to include missile defence systems. However, whilst Russian officials cited missile defence as a remaining obstacle to further bilateral arms control treaties beyond NST, it is likely that various other factors

contributed to Russia's rejection of the overtures of the Obama administrations. One such reason might have been the fear of a devaluation of nuclear weapons by enhanced arms control efforts on a bilateral basis (Bidder, 2013). Moreover, Russian officials regarded conventional long-range weapons systems as being as dangerous as missile defence development.

In addition, US-Russian disputes over the possible violation of the INF Treaty were potentially directly linked to the issue of missile defences in Europe (Collina, 2014). In 2014, Washington officials argued that Moscow was:

In violation of its obligations under the INF Treaty not to possess, produce, or flight-test ground-launched cruise missiles with a range capability of 500 km to 5,500 km, or to possess or produce launchers of such missiles (US Department of State, 2014).

Nuclear weapons experts have stressed that the potential Russian violation of the INF Treaty was based on the alleged need to test systems that would be able to penetrate and destroy missile defence sites (Sokov, 2014a). In turn, Russian officials regarded the stationing of missile defence interceptors in Romania as a violation of the INF Treaty because the missile defence ramps could allegedly be used for offensive weapons. In addition, Russian officials claimed that the US would violate the INF Treaty by using target missiles in missile defence tests, which have similar characteristics to intermediate-range missiles (Thielmann, 2014b). However, the extent to which the INF Treaty was violated remains unclear. Moreover, as previously discussed, it might also be the case that Russia has used missile defence developments as a potential pretext for undermining a treaty that Russian military officials have long been dissatisfied with.

According to Russian nuclear experts, Moscow's rejection to enter into a more transparent regime on non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe was potentially caused by Washington's refusal to halt missile defence developments (Schulte, 2013: 7). At the same time, unresolved issues on missile defence were only one of various reasons as to why Russian policymakers remained opposed to transparency efforts on tactical nuclear weapons in Europe (Schulte, 2013: 7). The status coming from having tactical nuclear weapons, the conventional war fighting capabilities of NATO, the low costs of maintaining tactical nuclear weapons as a deterrent, and the reluctance to abandon one of the few areas in which Russian weaponisation has numerical advantages over NATO were equally important considerations of Russian policymakers (Weitz, 2011).

In terms of potential military developments as a reaction to US missile defence systems, numerous nuclear experts have contended that US BMD policies did not have a substantial impact on Russia's nuclear and conventional modernisation efforts. According to Podvig, Russia's rhetoric on nuclear modernisation has likely been utilized as 'added value' to deployment plans that were following a longer rollout plan by the Russian armed forces irrespective of BMD (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.). As such, it is difficult to separate official complaints over missile defence from actual long-held policy aims. At the same time, despite the failure to enter another legally binding arms control treaty, both the US and Russia continued to dismantle their nuclear arsenals. Throughout the period of the case study, Russian doctrines called for 'strategic stability' and 'equality' and removed the formerly contentious notion of using nuclear weapons pre-emptively in any regional crisis scenario. Russia did not revert to a significant increase in its nuclear spending (Podvig, 2011). Nevertheless, Shoumikhin argued that US missile defence was a central argument in favour of preserving the status of Russia's strategic forces and for the extension of service lives of ICBMs. According to him, US missile defence did foster a strengthening of the value and importance of Russian offensive capabilities and Russia's own air defence deployments (Shoumikhin, 2011: 113). According to Sutyagin, Russia started to invest in a range of means of both counteracting and defeating US BMD systems by updating former Soviet systems (Sutyagin, 2013a). Moreover, the Russian military also envisioned a programme of 'separation warheads' that would be able to penetrate US BMD systems of the future (Sutyagin, 2012). The programme involved investing \$150 billion until 2020, or around 20 per cent of the overall defensive budget (Arbatov, 2013a: 339). Moscow thus channelled resources into asymmetrical responses to US developments such as penetration aids and radar systems.

General Domestic and Foreign Policy Impact of US Ballistic Missile Defence

At the same time, missile defence disputes perpetuated the Cold War legacy of US-Russian relations. Instead of soothing Russian uneasiness surrounding the European security space, the US strategy to move missile defence cooperation and transparency measures into the centre of the relationship eventually heightened tensions. Whereas geopolitical antagonism existed regardless the level of missile defence cooperation, official statements on BMD suggest that the military deployment plans of the US aggravated the lingering tensions over European security. Putin maintained that the US policies would rely on:

The stereotypes of a bloc-based mentality. Everyone understands what I am referring to – an expansion of NATO that includes the deployment of new military infrastructure with U.S. drafted plans to establish a missile defense system in Europe (Putin, 2012b).

The Russian president continued to criticise the mechanism of Euro-Atlantic security institutions:

We are worried that although the outline of our ‘new’ relations with NATO are not yet final, the alliance is already providing us with “facts on the ground” that are counterproductive to building mutual trust. At the same time, this approach will backfire with respect to global objectives, making it more difficult to cooperate on a positive agenda and will impede any constructive realignment in international relations (Putin, 2012b).

Dmitri Rogozin criticised the missile defence would perpetuate friend-enemy relations between the ‘West’ and Russia:

BMD is, first of all, an ideological project, and not just missiles. If you are [a participant] in BMD, you are inside the system, you are one of them. But if you are outside [...] then you are a stranger, which means that eventually this system can be turned against you (cited in Tsyarkin, 2012: 61).

Because of the on-going differences in geostrategic interests, both sides regarded the policies of the other side as a conscious attempt to trigger divisions in European security. For Russia, BMD deployments in the vicinity of Russia were regarded as military dangers that threatened to undermine Russian influence on European security policies. The US negotiations with states that were at times openly hostile to Russia fostered a Russian mind-set that regarded US allegations that the system would be directed against Iran as a mere cover for geopolitical aims (Kozin, 2014, pers. comm.). As Jim Miller, US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy from 2012 – 2014, recalls, Russian negotiating partners in NST talks regarded BMD as:

Something that was enhancing NATO’s capability vis-à-vis Russia [...] Over time, Russia reasoned, it would bring NATO together [and] the Russians saw a risk that NATO would grow stronger and that it was willing to always do what the US would say (Miller, 2014, pers. comm.).

Russia’s perceptions were potentially exacerbated by the leakage of diplomatic files alleging that the US pursued discussions with Baltic states over the possible expansion of missile defence and defensive procurements in the Baltics (‘Missile shield plans cause rift between US, Europe and Russia’, 2010). The US and various NATO allies, in turn, regarded Russia’s overtures on missile

defence cooperation as an effort to limit American influence on the continent (Lo, 2009: 3). According to Weitz, US policymakers reasoned that Russia was attempting to establish a sphere of interest in Eastern Europe by opposing US BMD deployments (Weitz, 2010: 105).

In addition to geostrategic considerations, missile defence also exacerbated the lack of trust in US-Russian relations by triggering mutual suspicions surrounding the actions of the other side. In light of the on-going mutual accusations, Weitz maintained that:

Decades of disagreement regarding missile defense have institutionalized distrust between NATO and Russia. Politicians in these countries believe that the other side does not want genuine cooperation and is only playing for time (Weitz, 2013: 12–13).

In US-Russian exchanges, missile defence issues were central for the preservation of mutually hostile rhetoric that at times extended to broader differences between the US and Russia and served to characterise the respective other side as ‘irrational’ or ‘aggressive’. In a speech in January 2014 Deputy NATO Secretary General Alexander Vershbow maintained that ‘many Russian experts have publically agreed that the [US EPAA] will have no appreciable impact on Russia’s [...] strategic forces [...] The good news is that this shows that press freedom is not entirely dead in Russia.’ (Vershbow, 2014) James Clapper, director of US National Intelligence, said that ‘I think it is well known the Russians are paranoid about missile defense.’ (Cited in Braun, 2012: 396) Discussions on the EPAA perpetuated a mindset among multiple NATO officials who alleged that Russia saw an opportunity to create tensions within NATO (Miller, 2014, pers. comm.). US policymakers continued to suspect that Russia was essentially trying to derail the US missile defence policy in order to ‘keep the issues alive’, and Russian suspicions that NATO makes insincere public declarations on cooperation in order to decrease public opposition (Weitz, 2013: 12–13). The Russian side, in turn, continued to conflate ballistic missile defence with America’s obsession for ‘absolute security’ (Rogozin, 2011) and its ‘quest for global hegemony’. (Stent, 2014: 228)

Although these allegations were in themselves undermining a more stable relationship and principles of mutual transparency, the continuous negotiations surrounding BMD meant that prejudices were carried into bilateral and multilateral discussions. As a result of continued opacity in diplomatic exchanges, diplomats involved in missile defence discussions were never sure whether the Russian side was genuine in its stated concerns, or whether most of the Russian complaints were purposefully exaggerated (Zadra, 2014b pers. comm.). Russia’s

cooperative approach was regarded as either ‘totally ill-conceived and of the cuff, or as a bluff that the other side deliberately intended to be rejected.’ (Dvorkin, 2013: 217) Throughout discussions on future transparency measures, ‘the impression was that the Russians were insulting us by deliberately inflating the threat rhetoric’, as Greg Thielmann maintains (Thielmann, 2014a, pers. comm.). Because Moscow’s repeated criticism had by now increased suspicions that Moscow’s concerns were not ‘grounded in reality’, Blank suggests that Russia’s shifting of BMD into the centre of security issues with the United States was something that the US and NATO ‘could not take seriously’. (Blank, 2014, pers. comm.)

US diplomats continued to see Russia’s overtures as essentially tactical, in particular after the muted Russian reaction to the cancellation of the fourth phase of the EPAA. Vershbow maintained that the on-going objections of Russia ‘left a growing impression in NATO that each time we offer to compromise, Russia just moves the goal posts further.’ (Vershbow, 2014) Likewise, a British diplomat argued that the result of Russia’s diplomacy was ‘strategic constipation’, as the interlinking of several issues made it impossible to resolve any one of them (Giles and Monaghan, 2014: 34). Russia’s cooperative overtures also failed to convince NATO and US officials because Moscow was never able to elaborate on detailed cooperation plans. As Vershbow highlighted, ‘what does Russia mean by “full command and control” integration? Would this mean the US would be able to use Russian S-400 and S-500s and the missile defence system around Moscow?’ (Vershbow, 2013)

Another effect of BMD cooperation efforts was an increasing discrepancy between public statements that continued to voice hopes for mutual agreements and cooperation and the deeply ingrained reluctance to meet the demands of the respective other side. In fact, official statements on missile defence at times resembled a ‘public relations battle’ over which side would voice more enthusiastic visions on the possible solutions on BMD that either ignored the broader constraints or wilfully sought to paint the other side’s position in a less cooperative light, thereby fostering cynical attitudes. As mentioned, public diplomatic overtures were at times used to picture one’s own side as a responsible stakeholder in international relations. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov maintained:

We do not see any particular sense in [Obama’s transparency overtures] because they will show us a picture of missile defense [...] Americans are not giving us access to the actual information that we would need to develop this topic [...] This invitation is not more than a propagandistic step (‘Russia Dismisses U.S. Antimissile Test Proposal as Propaganda’, 2011).

Kozin argued that Russian policymakers thought that Obama's EPAA was a mere 'hide and seek' strategy and that would camouflage Washington's real intentions (Kozin, 2014, pers. comm.). Russian complaints that the US did not inform Moscow over deployment plans in Europe were countered by US Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Tauscher who alleged that 'my Russian counterparts were informed [...] that the president was going to offer Romania the opportunity to host Phase 2 in 2015 – the land-based SM-3 site.' ('Bulgaria to Talk with U.S. about Missile Defense', 2010)

The US, in turn, presented missile defence issues first and foremost as a communication problem. Repeated arguments that BMD would pose no threat to Russia resembled assertions that the expansion of NATO and the European Union would be in Russia's interest if Moscow 'would see the light'. (Charap and Troitskiy, 2013: 56) This 'Western' stance was regarded as highly provocative and detrimental to Russian interests (Buzhinsky, 2014, pers. comm.). Russia's reading of US EPAA plans, in contrast, was based on a belief that NATO would 'invent fantasy threats' to develop their own inflexible strategies that would not be changed by outside interference. Through repeated claims by the US elite, such 'invented' threats would become public opinion. As Ivanov maintained, 'when we do not see the reason for some BMD policies, it raises suspicions by default' (Ivanov, 2014, pers. comm.).

For US policymakers, Russia's conduct was consistently interpreted as reverting to 'Cold War strategies' and 'Cold War attitudes'. The very fact that Russia continued to oppose BMD was often explained as rooted in a 'Cold War mind set'. (US diplomat (b), 2014, pers. comm.) Interviewees on the Russian side complained that the more nuanced messages in the field of missile defence were often neglected, whilst any statement from one single military officer was highlighted as it fed into a general predisposition to seeing Russia in purely negative terms and as a 'crazy state – like in previous times' (Ivanov, 2014, pers. comm.).

Domestically, missile defence disputes further ingrained stereotypes of the other side. BMD continued to drive the domestic agendas in Russia and the US and acted as a challenge to the wider reset as it reinforced concerns on both sides about the intentions of the other ('Medvedev warns of arms race by 2020 without agreement on missile defense', 2011). In Washington, former officials of the Reagan administration and other nuclear hawks promoted zero-sum thinking in US-Russian nuclear relations that put pressure on the Obama administration, thereby

significantly constraining a friendlier foreign policy outlook towards Russia. Domestic institutions in Russia maintained a Cold War outlook on nuclear policies by fostering narratives that continued to be focused on nuclear strategies, mutually assured destruction, and the defence-offense balance.

Conclusion

The elevation of missile defence into the centre of the ‘reset’ – in part because both sides lacked other means to discuss and overcome differences on their respective visions of European security – meant that the future of the ‘reset’ itself depended on the resolution of outstanding differences on BMD. ‘The attempt to create something new through cooperation on missile defence’, Zadra maintained, ‘almost meant using a back door, in the absence of a bilateral strategic bargain between Washington and Moscow.’ (Zadra, 2014a: 57)

However, the attempt to turn missile defence from a decade-old stumbling block into a stepping-stone to a more sustainable rapprochement in bilateral relations failed for several reasons. First, it was implausible that missile defence cooperation could replace the lingering differences over the structure of Euro-Atlantic security. Instead, missile defence diplomacy consolidated the dichotomy between granting Russia a role as a junior partner in European affairs and Moscow’s quest for equality in US-Russian relations (Karaganov et al., 2011: 25).

Second, missile defence remained one of the most politicised national security issues in Russia as well as in the United States, thus making any political arrangement extremely difficult to accomplish. Instead, according to Sokov, hostile attitudes towards the respective other side’s missile defence policy improved career possibilities in Russia and the US (Sokov, 2014b, pers. comm.). Third, the cooperative rhetoric surrounding BMD and high expectations to use BMD as a tool to foster a US-Russian rapprochement contradicted the modest character of the US-Russian ‘reset’ in 2009 (Monaghan, 2011b). Missile defence cooperation efforts were themselves employed to avoid more substantial issues in US-Russian relations, but once the cooperative framework on nuclear disarmament, Afghanistan and Iran was accomplished, the failure to agree on appropriate mechanisms in the area of missile defence undermined a prolongation of the rapprochement. BMD cooperation in itself required too many sweeping changes in terms of military and political questions that neither side was able to deal with. The cooperative rhetoric diverged fundamentally from the willingness of both sides to seek actual compromises. Missile defence was employed as a ‘low-cost’ means to reach other political ends. Outstanding BMD

issues were at least in part responsible for the failure of entering another arms control treaty after the conclusion of New Start in 2010. As such, US missile defence contributed to a halt of the 'nuclear reset' between the US and Russia.

At the same time, despite the cancellations of various bilateral and multilateral meetings on the premise of the unresolved questions on BMD in 2012 and 2013 along with the effects on mutual trust building, the US and Russia insulated BMD-related issues from cooperative overtures in the area of arms control (2010) and cooperation on Iran (2009-2013). As such, missile defence did not have a greatly destabilising impact on either the US and Russia military build-ups, or other areas of cooperation. Instead, missile defence policies were largely shaped by broader developments in US-Russian relations such as the NATO intervention in Libya. The impact of BMD on US-Russian relations was not the immediate deterioration of relations, but rather the failure to sustain a more ambitious long-term rapprochement that lacked other projects that would go beyond the resolution of short-term cooperation on NST, Iran, and Afghanistan.

Chapter 8

NATO-Russian BMD Diplomacy, 2009-2013

This chapter argues that the role of European NATO states in US-Russian missile defence disputes remained marginal. Two factors contributed to the lack of strategic significance of NATO in the field of missile defence. Firstly, by the time NATO decided to seek cooperative efforts on missile defence with Russia in 2010, Moscow was unwilling to significantly cooperate with the transatlantic alliance. Secondly, whilst Washington's officially aimed at NATOising missile defence, the influence of NATO's European member states on US missile defence policies remained negligible. Nevertheless, US and Russian attempts to use BMD to foster preferential policy outcomes with regard to the European security landscape had a negative impact on the bilateral relationship. The divergent BMD policies of both sides circumvented cooperative solutions and pitted European NATO states against Russia, thereby circumventing an inclusive Euro-Atlantic security dialogue.

To understand the crisis in NATO-Russian relations and the subsequent lack of progress on NATO-Russian missile defence policies, the chapter commences with a short introduction to the reasons for NATO-Russian contention throughout the period of the case study. It then proceeds with the rationales of Germany and Poland in the field of missile defence policies to account for the role of European NATO states. Before looking at the impact of missile defence on NATO-Russian relations, the chapter discusses the likely reasoning of the US and Russia in the area of missile defence policies in the NATO framework.

NATO-Russian Relations, 2009-2013

After the severing of ties in NATO-Russian relations in the wake of the Georgian War, at the 2010 Lisbon Summit, NATO and Russia agreed to seek cooperation in counter-narcotics, stabilising Afghanistan, and non-proliferation efforts (Kriendler, 2013). However, various obstacles remained prevalent in the relationship. First, priorities among multiple Eastern European allies, in particular Poland and the Baltics, and Russia remained fundamentally opposed to each other (Noetzel and Schreer, 2009). Second, Russia remained suspicious about plans to turn NATO into a military alliance with global outreach. Third, agreements on a CFE follow-on treaty of conventional arms control in Europe remained contentious in terms of NATO's plans to further expand NATO, the imbalance between the number of weapons held

by NATO and Russia, and Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states (Arbatov, 2010a: 7). Underlying the continuing scepticism was Russian dissatisfaction about the European security architecture that Moscow increasingly sought to reverse (Arbatov, 2010a).

The major obstacles between NATO and Russia remained NATO's existence itself, or at least the predominant role of the alliance in European security settings. A leaked US cable on Medvedev's and Putin's discussions with NATO Secretary General Rasmussen alleged that:

Neither [Medvedev] nor [...] Putin had expressed any real interest in cooperating with NATO. Putin allegedly told [NATO Secretary General] Rasmussen that NATO no longer has a purpose and it was in Russia's interest that NATO no longer exists ('Additional Details on SYG Moscow Trip: Alleged Putin sparred on Missile Defense', 2010).

The NATO-Russia Council remained mired in controversy and lack of progress on concrete security cooperation, which also affected the area of theatre missile defence cooperation (Reisinger, 2014). Lack of progress on theatre missile defence cooperation and failures to meet concerns of the respective other side came from broader misgivings and different strategic aims. As Monaghan observed, 'NATO [saw] the development of meaningful practical cooperation as the key to reasoning out problems, while Moscow [saw] their resolution in the establishment of political dialogue on an inclusive and equal footing.' (Monaghan, 2009a: 5) Arbatova relatedly maintained that practical cooperation was first and foremost an advantage for NATO as it proved that the organisation was able to accommodate Russia without bringing the broader security agenda in Europe into question (Arbatova, 2014, pers. comm.). When NATO for the first time endorsed long-range missile defence cooperation with Russia at the Lisbon Summit in 2010, the overall relationship between the alliance and Russia had reached another low point in the post-Cold War era.

Europe's Foreign and Missile Defence Policy: Description and Interpretation

Germany

There were few indications that states initially sceptical of US missile defence policies would endorse Russia's opposition to stationing interceptors in Eastern Europe. Whereas Germany initially continued to seek a compromise on missile defence between Russia's preferences on the one side and US and Polish preferences on the other (German diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.), and German Chancellor Angela Merkel welcomed renewed US-Russian overtures as it could

intensify ‘cooperation with Moscow on international issues’ (cited in Stent, 2014: 227), Russia’s ‘sectorial approach’ to missile defence was perceived to be a ‘diplomatic gambit’ that resembled a ‘poisonous offer’. (German diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.) In fact, German diplomats who were previously predisposed to include Russia in BMD initiatives now came to argue that ‘Russia cannot rule on NATO’s decision making’. (German diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.) As a result, Berlin grew more reluctant to endorse Russia’s position within NATO (Adomeit, 2012).

This change in policy was echoed by a more pronounced endorsement of NATO’s nuclear posture stressing the centrality of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe for the transatlantic security agenda. In April 2011, Germany acquiesced to signing the ‘letter of 10’ which made clear that Berlin regarded Western unilateral reduction of TNW as ‘imprudent’ in light of Russia’s non-reciprocity (Vanackere et al., 2010). At the 2012 Munich Security Conference, Foreign Minister Westerwelle stressed the importance of Russian steps on the disarmament process and alliance coherence, whilst his enthusiasm on ballistic missile defence cooperation had significantly declined (Westerwelle, 2012). Behind Berlin’s BMD diplomacy was the continued endorsement of the US as the major and most significant ally for Germany (Adomeit, 2012).

In addition, missile defence disputes were not of primary importance for Berlin’s policymakers. For Germany’s Foreign Minister Westerwelle, the removal of tactical nuclear weapons from European and German soil was more important than finding a solution on Russian opposition to US missile defence deployment. Westerwelle advanced an ambitious nuclear disarmament agenda that emphasised the willingness to unilaterally remove America’s tactical nuclear weapons from either Germany (‘national zero’) or, preferably, Europe (Freie Demokratische Partei, 2009: 66–76). Germany’s demand to rid itself from US tactical nuclear weapons on its soil marked the first time that a NATO ally has explicitly requested the removal of US tactical nuclear weapons from its territory (Meier, 2009). Germany’s foreign ministry stressed that deterrence should move from an overreliance on the nuclear element towards a more strategic deterrence that would include conventional forces, ballistic missile defences and diplomatic tools (Westerwelle and Verhagen, 2010). The foreign minister’s BMD agenda echoed Barack Obama’s initial call for a rapprochement with Russia based on an ‘incremental approach’ aimed at including Russia in NATO’s missile defence shield. The German Foreign Ministry reasoned that the existence of two divergent missile defence systems could slowly lead in the direction of a cooperative system

(Hoyer, 2011). Berlin was more active in the field of tactical nuclear weapons, whilst it left missile defence policies to the US and NATO member states.

At the same time, Germany's stance on missile defence deployment was influenced by a number of other developments. First, Germany's endorsement of NATO-Russian cooperation on missile defence was 'filtered through' various more sceptical allies within the NATO-Russia Council. According to one German diplomat, numerous Eastern European allies were reluctant to seek NATO consensus as long as there would be the chance to come to an agreement with the US on a bilateral basis (German diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.).

Differences in stances on missile defences were also detectable among former sceptics of US policies. Whilst Germany argued that NATO would be able to give Russia legal guarantees that NATO's BMD system would not be directed against Russia, the French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé refrained from offering a legal guarantee to Russia (Lindstrom, 2012: 21). As previously more sceptical allies were satisfied with the change in US missile defence policies, 'Germany did not have an ally in its effort to include Russia in cooperative plans', as a German diplomat recalls (German diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.). Secondly, Germany's own perception of Russia's policies moved towards a more pronounced scepticism on Russia's domestic developments and foreign policies (Adomeit, 2012). According to a German diplomat, there was a widespread perception that Moscow was unwilling to contribute to significant cooperation in the NATO-Russia Council (German diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.). In fact, according to Brüggmann, by 2012 the Russian-German relationship had turned into a 'new ice age', thereby decreasing the likelihood of a more accommodating German stance on Russian security demands (Brüggmann, 2012).

Poland

Poland opposed the disarmament initiatives of the US and Germany. For Waszczykowski, it was 'totally crazy to talk about nuclear zero'. (Waszczykowski, 2014, pers. comm.) Obama's Prague speech on a 'nuclear weapons free world' was considered to reflect a weakening of US support to its Eastern European allies (Kulesa, 2014a, pers. comm.). This scepticism was based on the broader perception that the inauguration of Obama undermined the 'special relationship' with the US. In fact, with the inauguration of the Obama administration, the Polish influence on the

US faded, as did the amount of democratic, economic and military cooperation with Washington (Waszczykowski, 2014, pers. comm.).

Fears that the Obama administration would leave Poland 'behind' partly emanated from the reluctance of the Obama administration to consult with its Czech and Polish allies throughout the missile defence review process in the first half of 2009 (Kulesa, 2014a, pers. comm.). 'The perspective of a [US-Russian] quid pro quo on Iran and BMD', Kulesa stressed, 'intensified the anxiety of the Polish side. A complete reversal of the US decisions on European deployments would have left Warsaw as the main political victim of the BMD saga in Europe.' (Kulesa, 2014b: 17) Some conservative Polish tabloids alleged that the US decision would resemble a 'betrayal to the Polish cause' and former Polish statesmen openly criticised the Obama administration for its decision ('Czech, Polish Press Slam US Axing of Missile Shield', 2009, 'Eastern Europe Rues Diminished Ties to US After Missile Program Scrapped', 2009).

The US offer to station SM-3 Block IIA interceptors from 2018 onwards was seen with scepticism among the Polish security elite. As various officials alleged, there was 'no proof' that the US would not once again reverse its course if Russia continued to oppose the BMD system (Waszczykowski, 2014, pers. comm.). Given the technological developments on BMD, the decision was regarded as being open to change (Kulesa, 2014b: 19). Another downside from the Polish perspective was that the EPAA missile defence system in Poland would, in contrast to the third site, not necessarily protect the US from incoming Middle Eastern missiles. Thus, in contrast to the Bush system, US security was de-linked from Polish contributions, which decreased the strategic value of the system for the US (Durcalek, 2014, pers. comm.).

Nevertheless, the Polish government voiced its interest in pursuing negotiations on Washington's proposal to station missile defences in Poland at a later stage (Hildreth and Ek, 2009: 2). Numerous officials also alleged that the EPAA provided wider defence for the continent and was therefore more defensible against criticism. Moreover, the fact that the US dispatched high-ranking officials to re-assure America's 'iron clad' commitment to Polish security and its willingness to station SM-3 missiles in Poland in 2018 helped to calm Polish scepticism (Kulesa, 2014a, pers. comm.).

In addition, Poland's commitment to the third site and the US-Polish Patriot rotation agreement spilled over into a US Air Force agreement that was interpreted as a significant contribution to

Poland's security. The agreement was to serve as a substitute for the creation of the US garrison to support the Patriot battery as stipulated in the 2008 declaration. It was later upgraded into a US Air Detachment to support periodic joint training of US and Polish aircraft (F-16 and C-130). Durcalek contends that the missile defence cooperation overtures from 2007 onwards were pivotal in bringing about the air force agreement. 'Indirectly, the BMD saga with the US enhanced our security by providing rotational US air force presence in Poland.' (Durcalek, 2014, pers. comm.)

Lastly, the announcement of the cancellation of the third site was also smoothed by the fact that high ranking US officials contended that the US was forced to make the announcement on 17th September 2009 so as to circumvent the publication of a leak (Pisarski, 2014, pers. comm.) According to Jim Miller:

The Polish leadership initially misconceived the changed plans of the phased adaptive approach [understanding] that the US would throw the allies under the bus. As we were able to explain what we are doing, I take that the temperature went down dramatically (Miller, 2014, pers. comm.)

In its policies towards Russia, the Tusk administration pursued a mixed signal approach. To bolster deterrence towards Moscow, the Polish military stationed the Patriot battery just 50 kilometres from the Russian border. Moreover, Warsaw opposed Russia's call for a legally binding limitation on US BMD deployments. Polish policymakers feared that this could have created a precedent to block future conventional deployments by NATO states in Poland (Kulesa, 2014b: 22). Polish officials assessed Russia's unchanged criticism of US BMD policies despite Washington's scrapping of the fourth phase of the EPAA as an indication that BMD was not about Russia's military nuclear capabilities towards the US, but rather because of the opposition to the permanent stationing of military equipment in the former Warsaw Pact states (Kulesa, 2014b: 22).

In terms of NATO-Russian overtures, Poland aimed at closely scrutinising moves that related to Russia ('No discussion about us without us' as Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski maintained: US diplomat (b), 2014, pers. comm.). However, at the same time there were also indications that the 'NATOisation' of BMD did alter the Polish position in that it made Warsaw more prone to accept some confidence-building measures with Russia (even though it continued to refuse permanently stationed Russian inspectors on Polish soil) (Kulesa, 2014b: 33, footnote 58). In fact, in order to preserve NATO unity and to not cast Poland as a pro-American

‘outsider’ within the alliance, the Tusk government favoured to have a BMD system in place that would be agreed upon by all NATO states (Durcalek, 2014, pers. comm.). There was also a general desire to build upon the proposals of the Obama administration because the EPAA was clearly considered to be ‘better than nothing’. (Expert on Missile Defence, 2014). Additionally, as Kulesa highlights, Poland did not have to ‘get tough’ on any of the NATO allies because of Russia’s refusal to echo US overtures (Kulesa, 2014a, pers. comm.).

Underlying Factors in European BMD Policies

At the same time, the overall influence of NATO Europe on US missile defence policies remained marginal. As argued before, multiple NATO member states endorsed the scrapping of the third site in favour of the European Phased Adaptive Approach. Apart from focusing on more imminent threats, multiple NATO member states argued that the Phased Adaptive Approach would also enhance the deterrent capabilities of NATO as it would add a layer to its structure (Thränert, 2010). Missile defence would reinforce Article 5 commitments as it provided NATO with another layer of defence. NATO’s BMD would reinforce the same threat perceptions and risk analyses regardless from where the threat might emanate. As the end of NATO’s mission in Afghanistan loomed large, various officials reasoned that BMD would be a central project for sustaining military cooperation within NATO (Mayer, 2011: 9–10).

However, beyond the official enthusiasm surrounding Obama’s EPAA, actual patterns of US-European policies on missile defence scarcely changed. European NATO states remained largely unenthusiastic about the cooperation on short-range and medium-range missile defence systems (NATO diplomat, 2014, pers. comm., 2014). Despite the pledge to cover Europe with territorial defences, technologies for territorial protection were not in place (Thielmann, 2014a, pers. comm.). In fact, Podvig estimates that the Obama administration’s EPAA was not designed to protect all European territory (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.). At the 2010 RUSI BMD conference, Jim Miller maintained that ‘in the United States there is bipartisan consensus in support of a strong missile defense program for [...] helping [not ‘protecting’] our allies and partners defend themselves.’ (Miller, 2010)

At the same time, Europe’s willingness to significantly contribute to NATO’s BMD project was limited. Originally, NATO envisioned \$200 million in investments for linking the national TMD capabilities to an alliance-wide project. Moreover, NATO endorsed an increase in national

contributions to accelerate the build-up of a NATO system (Thränert, 2010). According to Podvig, ‘nobody in Europe was willing to spend money to build the kind of missile defense that would be able to do anything useful.’ (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.) As one German diplomat maintained, NATO states were unwilling to enter negotiations on the diverging threat perceptions among the allied states because the individual members states were aware of the fact that a common strategic outlook that would justify the deployment of missile defences did not exist (German diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.).

Moreover, whilst missile defence policies were officially ‘NATOised’, the actual influence of European NATO states was more constrained than officially suggested. According to Kulesa, ‘there was no country that rejected the basic line that European countries would be part of BMD, but that the US would take the lead.’ (Kulesa, 2014a, pers. comm.) At the same time, the European Phased Adaptive Approach continued to constrain Europe’s influence on the US command and control system in the US upper-tier system (Kamp, 2014, pers. comm.). Significant obstacles about the command and control structure concerning the Romanian Aegis Ashore SM-3 interceptors-unit remained prevalent in 2015. As such, cooperative efforts between the US and NATO merely echoed initiatives by the Bush administration that had sought to increase NATO’s consent to the third site through adding theatre missile defence systems from European NATO’s states.

The partial lack of European enthusiasm on European missile defences, the US side-lining of European influences on command and control structures and the fragmentation of European opinions on the necessity for missile defence resulted in a decrease in NATO’s importance regarding missile defence negotiations with Russia. NATO members were initially divided as to how to deal with Russia, ranging from states that proposed restrictions aiming for minimum contact with Russia to those who pursued a ‘Russia first’ policy in all cooperative planning processes (Reisinger, 2014: 2). As a result, multiple NATO states were content that negotiations on BMD remained based on a bilateral understanding between the US and Russia (German diplomat, 2014, pers. comm.). Despite earlier attempts by various NATO states, namely Germany, to foster a more prominent Russian role in the field of BMD, the bilateral US-Romanian Ballistic Missile Defence Agreement of September 2011 envisioned no cooperation with Russia (Lindstrom, 2012: 21). Whereas theatre missile defence cooperation in the NATO-Russia Council had, according to Zadra, reached a ‘certain independence’, it nevertheless ‘fell short of detaching itself from the broader NATO-Russian and US-Russian relationship.’ (Zadra,

2014b, pers. comm.) Similar to other discussions on nuclear stability mechanisms, NATO remained a hostage of the lack of strategic dialogue between Russia and the United States (Reisinger, 2014).

Because the major components of NATO's BMD were based on US technologies, according to Thränert, the US was 'using the missile defence project to assert its leadership claim within the alliance.' ('US embassy cables', 2010a) Likewise, Podvig maintained that NATO aimed at finding a formula to 'save face' and to 'pretend the EPAA is something that Europe is actively participating in.' (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.) Instead, according to Olivier Schmitt, Europe's role on US BMD policies remained limited because of the unwillingness of Europe to support a Common Security and Defence Policy (Schmitt, 2013: 414). As a result of European differences in its dealings with BMD and Russia, neither NATO nor the European Union emerged as pivotal entities in US-Russian missile defence policies.

Europe's Role in US and Russian BMD Policies

Influence on US policymaking

For the Obama administration, the European stances on missile defence remained influential for various reasons. First, the Bush administration's extension of US missile defence systems into Eastern Europe created a new reality in which it became increasingly hard to return to the previous position of having no BMD system stationed on Polish soil. Despite the initial scepticism of Obama regarding missile defences, the US Ambassador to NATO, Daalder, argued that:

The United States remains committed to the protection of all our Allies, and we are more determined than ever to put in place, in the shortest possible time, the strongest and most effective technologies [...] The United States is not walking away from missile defense. Together with NATO, we are addressing it head-on as powerfully as we know how (Daalder, 2010).

As a result of the commitments to Eastern European security, as Pifer highlighted, a reversal of US BMD deployments in Poland was seen as an 'unrealistic option'. (Pifer, 2014, pers. comm.) He stressed that the EPAA deployments in Eastern Europe would have to 'go forward because they are now becoming a test for American political commitment to Eastern European security.' (Pifer, 2014, pers. comm.) Likewise, the Obama administration was constrained by former commitments of the Bush administration regarding the use of the Patriot missile battery in

Poland. As Thielmann argues, when Poland stationed the Patriot battery in the vicinity of Russia, ‘we could hardly push back on this issue to give the Poles the feeling that we are letting the Russians determine where the BMD base should be based.’ (Thielmann, 2014a, pers. comm.) The exclusion of Poland from the Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative (EASI) study, which included high ranking former US official such as the former director of the US Missile Defence Agency Lieutenant General Henry Obering as well as Russian participants and signified an important alternative to Russia’s demands, was a central reason why the US did not endorse it (Lilly, 2014b, loc. 2437/9198).

Eastern European state leaders simultaneously sought to increase the pressure on the US administration. A letter by Lech Walesa, Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rotfeld, Vaclav Havel and others, urged the US administration to restrain its abandonment of Eastern European allies and feared that Eastern and Central European states would no longer be in the centre of US foreign policy. Missile defence, they argued:

Has [...] become [...] a symbol of America's credibility and commitment to the region [...] The Alliance should not allow the issue to be determined by unfounded Russian opposition. Abandoning the program entirely or involving Russia too deeply in it without consulting Poland or the Czech Republic can undermine the credibility of the United States across the whole region (Adamkus et al., 2009).

In addition, the Obama administration continued to face significant domestic pressure regarding the missile defence commitment to Eastern European allies. In a visit to Poland, Republican Presidential candidate Romney condemned the US administration for ‘abandoning Poland’. (Flanagan, 2012) Former Undersecretary of Defence and Arms Control, John Bolton, argued that the scrapping of the third site was a ‘concession to the Russians with absolutely nothing in return’. (‘Obama shelves Europe missile plan’, 2009) Republicans in Congress repeatedly used Eastern European opposition to Obama’s decision as a means to put the president under pressure. In fact, according to Thielmann, ‘every Lithuanian that says something nice about Bush’s missile defence “represented” Europe for the members of Congress’ (Thielmann, 2014a, pers. comm.).

Influence on Russian policymaking

Sutyagin and Patel have argued that Russia’s BMD strategies under Medvedev and Putin were based on the application of an ‘ambiguous policy to stop or deter BMD deployment [...] to

divide NATO members so as to avoid the alliance from unifying wholesale behind US leadership.’ (Sutyagin and Patel, 2012) However, it is likely that the importance of European audiences in Moscow’s missile defence strategies decreased in favour of a general rejection of the existence of the alliance and, from 2011 onwards, in favour of domestic policies. It is likely that the general opposition of the perceived unchanged military character of the alliance fed into rejections to continue theatre missile defence cooperation in the framework of the NATO-Russia Council.

Russian support for enhanced NATO-Russian negotiations on missile defence was potentially undermined by the lack of progress in NATO-Russian negotiations. According to a Polish security expert, in 2010 Russia pushed for the inclusion of some of its plans to be included into NATO’s official policy line, but some NATO allies were seeing vast obstacles emerging if the cooperation agreement would have been more concrete. As such, NATO’s welcoming moves towards Russia might have been too enthusiastic (Expert on Missile Defence, 2014). According to Sokov, because of the lack of agreement among NATO member states regarding the Russian role in missile defence cooperation and transparency, the Lisbon Summit BMD cooperation agreement was ‘doomed to fail’ from the outset (Sokov, 2014b, pers. comm.).

In the environment of lingering tensions, concrete proposals failed to offer a viable path for both sides. One major problem, Podvig maintained, was that ‘although it’s rarely spelled out [...] the dialog between NATO and Russia is very much irrelevant – what matters is the U.S.-Russian discussions.’ (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.) The fact that there was ‘no NATO system at all’ meant that the meetings with Russia ‘ended up as a strange arrangement in which Russia at times tried to talk to NATO about missile defence when in fact the allied approach fell short of creating a joint project with shared technological input and command and control structure.’ (Podvig, 2014b, pers. comm.) As a result, Russian diplomats remained outspokenly hostile to NATO proceedings, which were seen as a multilateral cover for what essentially remained a US project. One Russian expert assessed that the cooperative overtures were a ‘camouflage’ as they would not go ‘beyond a certain point because it was the US that decided on the direction of it’ (Kozin, 2014, pers. comm.). From the Russian perspective, EPAA remained a US system that neither granted Russia nor Europe any decisive role (Buzhinsky, 2014, pers. comm.).

Impact on NATO-Russian Relations

The elevation of NATO's importance in missile defence diplomacy did not contribute to more satisfactory outcomes on either side. Instead, 'the NATO-Russia dialogue on missile defense [remained] replete with frustrations, threats and a lack of any comprehensive agreements on the issue', as Weitz stressed (Weitz, 2013: 7). Discussion in the NATO-Russia NATO-Russia Council Missile Defence Working Group chaired by Roberto Zadra at times took on a Cold War-like character in which details of technological sophistications of strike weapons and defences would be continuously discussed, whereas the overall political post-Cold War framework was side-lined. Karaganov et al. have argued that by 'focusing on problems that no longer exist, Russia and the U.S. traded accusations and claims which start to live their own life that has nothing to do with the real international situation and cause serious damage to their relations.' (Karaganov et al., 2011: 24)

NATO diplomats felt that two years of negotiations had been conducted in vain because Russia had apparently resisted discussions about its actual reservations regarding a global BMD system (debates were initially focusing on the European side of BMD: Zadra, 2014b, pers. comm.). Instead of generating a forum for open political discussions on the European security space, NATO-Russia Council meetings were used to revert to Cold War-like military-to-military accusations of nuclear policies of the other side by pointing to nuclear experts that had made statements on the technological impact of missile defences.

The Russian delegation in NATO continued to present technological analyses of American scientists such as Theodor Postol to show that US BMD could affect the Russian deterrent (NATO diplomat, 2014, pers. comm., 2014). The US side, on the other hand, based their disagreement with Russian arguments on analyses of Russian scientists such as Alexei Arbatov (Vershbow, 2014). The diplomatic BMD dynamics suggest that the divisions in Euro-Atlantic security increased because of Russia's on going opposition to the EPAA. According to one US diplomat, Russian demands in 2011 were 'extremely helpful [...] it presented Russia as "unreasonable" and thereby facilitated a NATO consensus. With the Europeans taking part in overtures, the understanding as to how difficult it is to negotiate with the Russians increased.' (US diplomat (b), 2014, pers. comm.) As the American diplomat recalls, 'Europe could now feel the pain that the US went through in former negotiations with Russia.' (US diplomat (b), 2014, pers. comm.) The diplomats stressed that 'even Germany understood that there must be something unreasonable about Russia.' (US diplomat (b), 2014, pers. comm.) For Brad Roberts, Russia's BMD strategy was the 'perfect example of Russia's effort to develop proposals that

seemed more aimed at dividing the alliance than building cooperation.’ (Roberts, 2014, pers. comm.) However, it had ‘the reverse effect of unifying the alliance.’ (Roberts, 2014, pers. comm.)

In addition, NATO-Russia Council meetings remained hampered by the pre-determined stances of NATO member states. Kamp recalls that ‘NATO always pretended that there were no differences among the alliance members. Of course, the Russian side knew better and remained frustrated about it’. (Kamp, 2014, pers. comm.) In meetings with German or Italian diplomats, as Russian General Buzhinsky recalls, officials often voiced their own exasperation with US policies, but at the same time maintained that there was little they could do to counter US preferences (Buzhinsky, 2014, pers. comm.). As a result, Lavrov critically noted that:

We cannot influence what is being done within NATO, but we always say that once the presidents of all Russia-NATO Council countries agreed in Lisbon to work on a joint project of missile defense, intra-NATO discussions should at least not run ahead of the discussions within the Russia-NATO Council. Meanwhile, the opposite happens. Moreover, even in spite of promises that everything will be transparent within the Alliance, they do not tell us in a timely fashion how the intra-NATO discussions proceed (Lavrov, 2011).

Because the NATO-US overtures consumed much of the energy and remained based on a fragile compromise, the alliance remained more preoccupied with its own internal cooperation efforts. As a result, NATO’s approach tended to develop an ‘inflexible’ approach once a NATO consensus was reached (Arbatov, 2013a: 345). As a result, Russia increasingly refrained from devoting too much importance to the personnel in Brussels, thereby highlighting its low opinion of NATO as a crucial body in resolving broader US-Russian and NATO-Russian relations (Topychkanov, 2014, pers. comm.).

Missile defence was not the reason for the overall poor NATO-Russian relationship, but it exacerbated the ‘tiredness’ of both sides in dealing with the respective other side. According to Reisinger, throughout the period of the case study, discussions between NATO and Russia seemed to be ‘more ritualised than substantial.’ (Reisinger, 2014: 1) As such, the prevailing tensions over BMD contributed to a ‘Russia fatigue’ among NATO states that would at best promote relations ‘not against, but without Russia.’ (Reisinger, 2014: 5) NATO representatives perceived the council as a ‘one-way street: almost all initiatives for military cooperation come from Brussels [...] Russia is not in the least interested in becoming [...] a “normal partner” of NATO.’ (Reisinger, 2014: 2) As a result, Moscow’s BMD diplomacy solidified the consensus

among NATO allies to follow Washington's lead in moving ahead on territorial BMD (Kulesa, 2014b: 34).

Russian policymakers grew continuously unwilling to pursue cooperative efforts whilst overall dissatisfaction with European security remained prevalent. According to Arbatova, for Russian officials, NATO-Russian cooperation in the NRC allowed NATO to maintain a cover-up for a European security order that undermined Russian interests (Arbatova, 2014, pers. comm.). A Russian diplomat described the working climate at NATO on BMD as 'managing the partnership rather than "running on the spot" [...] The traffic light is green but NATO is still sitting in neutral. Russia is one car behind, beeping.' (Cited in Giles, 2011) As Fedyashin argued:

[NATO-Russian] sessions have been looking more and more like meetings between people wearing different hearing aids. Everyone hears only what they want to hear and offers different, sometimes contradictory, interpretations of what was said (Fedyashin, 2011).

As a result, the NATO-Russia Council fell short of the expectations held and eventually served as a mere forum for demonstrating the many differences between Russian and NATO policies (Zadra, 2014b, pers. comm.). In fact, disputes over BMD and the lack of progress in discussions contributed to the hollowing out of the common institutional status between NATO and Russia. Arbatov therefore highlighted that NATO-Russian diplomacy on BMD in the NRC framework 'resembled a scholastic exercise, detached from any military, political, or technical reality.' (Arbatov, 2013a: 349) Reisinger characterised the NRC as 'Potemkin-village-like' institutions in which 'disputes and irritations over a possibility of a common missile defence system have transformed this former showcase project [...] from a potential game changer to a major stumbling block.' (Reisinger, 2014: 2)

At various points in time, the 'NATOisation' also undermined possible US-Russian rapprochement on missile defence because Eastern European NATO member states feared an overall abandonment of US security guarantees in light of a US-Russian rapprochement (Hynek and Stritecky, 2010). Kulesa highlighted that 'Poland was clearly trying to keep Moscow as far from the Alliance's decision-making forum as possible.' (Kulesa, 2014b: 22) According to a US diplomat, Washington at times supported the sceptical views of Eastern European allies because it did not want to run the risk of being seen as an 'unreliable ally' in the eyes of Poland and the Baltic states. As the US diplomat highlighted, for the US the 'Polish consent' on transparency measures with Russia was 'necessary' to proceed with negotiations with Moscow (US diplomat,

2014, pers. comm.). Weitz has shown that overtures to confidence building measures (CBMs) between Russia and the US remained contentious because they eventually had to rely on the approval of third parties such as Poland, which made confidence building measures less attractive for Russia (Weitz, 2013: 19).

To this was added widespread suspicions about Russian moves on BMD. Polish policymakers interpreted Russian diplomacy as an attempt to exclude Poland and other NATO member states from the decision-making process on missile defence. Moreover, it was alleged that Russian officials would target the public discourse in Western Europe so as to foster a more anti-Polish view. According to Pacula, Russia aimed at transmitting messages to the public and general policymakers that would not be directly involved in security circles so as to enhance an understanding for Russia's viewpoint and create opposition to anti-Russian policies in the respective states (Pacula, 2014, pers. comm.). In light of the maligned, albeit not unrealistic, assessments of the respective other side's policies, a rapprochement on BMD remained elusive.

Conclusion

Because missile defence essentially remained a US-Russian issue and NATO states refrained from shifting it into the centre of their foreign policy conduct, the impact of BMD on NATO-Russian relations remained limited. This process was precipitated by three factors that made progress on NATO-Russian overtures unlikely. First, the NRC continued to be used as a forum in which the national priorities of transatlantic alliance member states were filtered before a common position towards Russia was presented in official negotiations. Second, despite the indirect influence on US policies by NATO allies, the US remained the core negotiator with Russia in the field of missile defence. Third, the value of the NRC was decreased because Russia rejected the overall approach of a forum in which Moscow lacked decisive decision-making power.

The NATOisation of US BMD policies under the Obama administration increased NATO's unity, whilst it simultaneously accelerated the division between Russia and NATO. This development was greatly enhanced by Europe's lack of willingness to elevate the importance of an understanding on BMD into the centre of alliance policies. Because the scrapping of the third site was interpreted as potentially undermining US security guarantees to its Eastern European partners, Washington favoured the unity of NATO and security guarantees towards its allies over attempts to meet Russian demands. Missile defence serves as an example of the security

dynamics in the Euro-Atlantic security space: The elevation of security within the alliance detrimentally affected Russia's interpretation of the European security architecture, whilst a rapprochement with Moscow on BMD was regarded as detrimental to the security of the alliance. Because Russia continued to see the US as the dominant actor in the formulation of European BMD policies, mutual suspicions between Washington and Moscow remained.

However, in the broader context of NATO-Russian disagreements, missile defence was only one of various deeper contentions on both sides. For European NATO states, US BMD remained a remote issue that was superseded by concerns over Washington's nuclear and conventional military commitments to Europe. As a result, European NATO states endorsed the EPAA despite a lack of influence in the command and control prerogatives, fundamentally diverging threat perceptions, and a general unwillingness to significantly contribute to the alliance's BMD project.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

This thesis argued that BMD must be interpreted as a predominantly diplomatic issue in post-Cold War US-Russian relations. The findings suggest that political scientists and arms control analysts misconceived the impact of US BMD on US-Russian post-Cold War relations by disregarding political-diplomatic considerations behind American and Russian international BMD policies. While experts on US-Russian relations regarded ‘nuclear sabre rattling’ as the most dangerous development in post-Cold War relations and added US BMD to the list of reasons for the negative developments in US-Russian relations, missile defence issues were of secondary importance in post-Cold War US-Russian relations. Neither did US BMD affect a wide range of other fields of cooperation and confrontation, nor did it circumvent renewed arms control treaties. Neither in the early 2000s, nor in the mid-2000s and early 2010s did missile defence determine the overall direction of the relationship. Rather than shaping US-Russian relations, missile defence policies were shaped by misgivings emanating from contrasting philosophical and political views in the international order, clashing geostrategic interests, and domestic partisanship.

The findings of the thesis suggest that rhetoric and policies on BMD were time and again diplomatically employed as a means to reach specific political ends unrelated to BMD. For example, whereas Russian utilised cooperative BMD overtures as a means to foster less US-centric European security policies, US cooperation overtures must be primarily seen as attempts to deflect from Russian requests with regard to a more ambitious inclusion of Russia into the post-Cold War Euro-Atlantic security architecture. Simply including ‘the issue of missile defence’ into an extensive list of reasons why US-Russian relations have taken their post-Cold War direction fails to account for the diplomatic strategies behind US and Russian missile defence policies as well as the remote significance of nuclear-related policies in the post-Cold War era.

Instead of reviving Cold War conflicts in the military realm as analyses on the impact of BMD by academics and think tankers suggest, US BMD conflicts predominantly revived Cold War-like patterns of diplomatic behaviour, which were defined by a latent existence of diplomatic opacity, rhetorical confrontations, and mistrust. The thesis showed that diplomatic interactions and continuous dialogue may have detrimental effects on state-to-state relations. Whereas Freedman

argued that ‘we need diplomacy if we want to manage this complex and dangerous world of ours’ (Freedman, 2013), the thesis shows that diplomacy, defined as a process in which international conflicts are discussed, can be as disturbing as the substance of state-to-state interactions. The controversy over US BMD was to a large extent intensified by the diplomatic exchanges and the ensuing mistrust. The lack of ingenuity to overcome highly politicised deliberations on defensive weapons systems perpetuated mutual antagonisms.

The thesis also revealed that a central bone of contention regarding missile defence policies was based on diverging agendas on the formulation and implementation of a post-Cold War European security architecture. Missile defence was persistently used and abused as a means to reach other diplomatic ends, but was hardly seen as a confrontational security challenge or a cooperative bracket between NATO and Russia. At the same time, whereas various statements by European officials suggest that missile defence was regarded as a major burden in post-Cold War NATO-Russian relations, the thesis also showed that missile defence issues were not seen as a central security challenge among European policymakers. In the European security context, missile defence remained a publically visible bone of contention that nevertheless failed to catch central or even substantial attention from European policymakers.

The reasons for the importance of missile defence in US-Russian relations

To set the overall stage for an assessment of the role of BMD in US-Russian relations, the thesis initially argued that US BMD continued its diplomatic importance in US-Russian relations despite its limited military significance. Various developments increased the importance of Washington’s rudimentary missile defence system in US-Russian relations. At the broadest level, the lasting importance of missile defence in US-Russian relations must be linked to the emerging dichotomy between Washington’s role as the predominant global power and Russia’s quest to remain a significant and influential power centre in post-Cold War global politics. Together with sharply diverging interpretations of the end of the Cold War, Washington’s attempt to partially ‘break free’ from the narrow security framework of the Cold War and Russia’s desire to preserve as much equality as possible contributed to on-going frictions that undermined a more sustainable partnership between both states.

In the nuclear security realm, this dichotomy translated into Washington’s preference for the deployment of a technologically questionable military system to counter a doubtful future threat over enhancing security links with Russia. Russia, in turn, regarded its nuclear arsenal as a means

to preserve its international influence and diplomatic resolve. By continuing to focus on mutually assured destruction, both sides reinforced their emphasis on nuclear deterrence (Betts, 2013). In the US, Cold War nuclear strategists and bureaucratic inertia perpetuated the doctrine of mutually assured destruction (Tannenwald, 2001: 51–52) at a time when nuclear weapons had, according to Jervis, become essentially ‘purposeless’ (Jervis, 2001). In Russia, nuclear weapons were regarded as offsetting its weak conventional military and became the ultimate guarantee of Russian security (Sokov, 2014c). Moreover, nuclear weapons were seen as an influential domestic tool for Russian administrations as they could use them as a ‘publicity instrument to compensate for the image of Russia’s [...] weakness’, as Tsypkin argued (Tsypkin, 2009: 784). Missile defence must be interpreted as a threat to the political relevance of Russia’s nuclear arsenal at a time in which Moscow’s regional importance and global institutional power bases, such as the centrality of the United Nations Security Council, eroded. At the same time, US BMD perpetuated nuclear military discussions and negotiations. The importance of nuclear issues came from the continuation of Cold War diplomatic attitudes lasting into the post-Cold War era. In fact, the framework in which the New Start Treaty was discussed did not fundamentally diverge from the first US-Soviet negotiations in the late 1960s.

At the same time, the visibility of missile defence in domestic security debates contributed to its importance. In both the Russian Duma and US Congress, missile defence at times represented a useful tool for undermining the authority of the administrations in power. At the same time, missile defence became conflated with broader security issues such as Russia’s increasing rejection of Gorbachevian ‘capitulationism’ and Washington’s ‘duty to defend Eastern Europe allies’. Likewise, the fundamental divergences in US and Russian intelligence estimates on the threats stemming from ‘rogue states’ likely perpetuated misunderstandings on both sides. As Kamp, the former research director at the NATO Defence College, conceded, ‘I had to give up to try to rationalise whether threat estimates changed over time—had the threat really increased or decreased? Or do we interpret things we know in a different way?’ (Kamp, 2014, pers. comm.). In Russia, institutions were slow to overcome long-held predispositions and scepticism toward the US, and regarded missile defence as being directed against Russian missiles.

In addition, deeply ingrained strategic security approaches and preferences could not be entirely overcome. Whereas missile defence represented an almost ‘theological’ approach among US policymakers (Pifer, 2013), ‘strategic stability’ had an equal standing for multiple Russian audiences. As such, historical analogies continued to be present among Russian and American

policymakers and bureaucrats. As much as missile defence struck a chord within the US because of its technological prowess (Peoples, 2010), it also partially resembled Russia's 'zero-sum' political culture according to which Moscow regards conflict and the striving for 'honour' as essential ends in international relations (Tsygankov, 2012).

US missile defence also shifted into the centre of continuous US-Russian tension because of its connection with disputes over the European security order. The dominant issue was, however, not the stationing of missile defences per se, but the movement of military equipment into Eastern European NATO states. Distinct visions of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture were arguably more important as the military factor in third site disputes. In addition, BMD cooperation efforts in the wake of the US-Russian reset enhanced the expectations of military-to-military efforts between both states. In the absence of agreements in other fields of Euro-Atlantic security, missile defence was regarded as a means to foster a *modus vivendi* on European security along the preferences of Russian and US officials.

The reasoning behind US and Russian missile defence diplomacy

In the post-Cold War era, US-Russian nuclear exchanges remained unlikely. As a result, the willingness of both sides to come to an understanding on missile defences decreased. This allowed Washington to ignore Russia's nuclear threat-making in favour of strengthening its ties with Eastern European NATO states. Likewise, Russian policymakers could politicise US missile defences without having to fear actual military repercussions. Missile defence represented an opportunity to expose the US as a revisionist power that undermined international stability, while Russia satisfied domestic and international audiences with popular non-proliferation initiatives. This policy allowed Russia to refer to itself as a responsible stakeholder in international relations, to draw global support for its policies, and to pressure Washington into renewed bilateral arms control initiatives.

The assessment of Russia's diplomacy suggests that Moscow's decision-makers were flexible on the issue of missile defence as long as an overall rapprochement promised to ameliorate US-Russian relations. Russia overlooked the allegedly destabilising effects of missile defence every time the political benefits of the moment, such as during the brief US-Russian rapprochement after the 9/11 attacks, which the United States used to withdraw from the ABM Treaty; and the success of New Start in 2010, offered political benefits.

The three case studies revealed a repetitive pattern in Russian behaviour. Moscow primarily aimed at proposing alternatives to US missile defence plans and transparency talks. As argued throughout the thesis, the Russian approaches appear to have been based on several considerations. First, they signalled a willingness to find compromises with the US should Russian interests be incorporated. Second, it is likely that cooperative approaches served as an attempt to garner the support of European NATO states for Russia's position. Rather than consciously 'dividing' the alliance, however, Russian manoeuvres suggest that Moscow considered this strategy to be a defensive move in light of US expansionism. Moreover, the analysis of Russian rhetoric indicated that Moscow attempted to utilise missile defence as a means for a more inclusive security debate on Euro-Atlantic security. As the third case study argues, Russia was interested in seeking ways to test the 'Western' willingness to integrate Russia into the Euro-Atlantic security space by means of missile defence cooperation. However, Moscow rejected cooperation as long as it was not based on equality with the US and included other partners, such as China. Third, the stark rhetoric surrounding missile defence sites could have been based on the desire to extract concessions in the nuclear arms control field.

Whereas Russia's missile defence policies were reactive to Washington's actions, and while domestic pressure from broader groupings inside Russia had minor effects on the flexibility of Russian international BMD policies, the US administration's policies were often reactive to domestic developments. As such, one key factor in the formulation of US missile defence policies was based on domestic power considerations. With regard to strategic foreign policy aims, two factors stand out. The primary foreign policy aim of post-Cold War US missile defence policies was to ingrain Washington's global power projection by means of theatre and national missile defences systems. The US also sought to influence Eastern European allies. In the diplomatic realm, the US sought to sell its policies by various means. The Clinton administration attempted to preserve an altered ABM Treaty while continuously reassuring Russia of the importance of the principle of mutually assured destruction. This attempt was, however, constrained by the unwillingness of the US bureaucracy to significantly reduce the number of nuclear warheads and continuous attacks by the Republican Party, which argued that the preservation of the ABM Treaty was immoral. The George W. Bush administration sought to reverse the alleged Russia first-strategy of the Clinton administration by seeking the support of European allies, primarily by promising to extend the missile shield into Europe. At the same time, up to a point, the Bush administration was willing to soothe Russian concerns. The administration's policy was eventually undermined by the unwillingness to continue high-level

strategic talks with Russia and an overtly ambitious nuclear strategy. The Obama administration attempted to simultaneously resolve issues with Russia, NATO allies, and domestic critics over missile defences. All US administrations employed missile defence cooperation plans that were, on the one hand, based on the desire to calm Russian fears and, on the other hand, hampered by domestic constraints and the foreign policy outlook of the US.

Neither the Clinton nor the Obama administration reasoned that missile defence was an issue worth fighting for on the domestic front, in particular as long as Russia supported the disarmament agenda of the Democratic administrations. In the ranking of US priorities, domestic considerations and European requests remained more important than Russian protests. As a result, the Obama administration's attempt to put missile defence at the centre of the US-Russian 'reset' was contradictory. First, drawing Russia closer to the European security order by means of missile defence cooperation contradicted the simultaneous extension of missile defence bases into Eastern Europe. Second, despite signals to the contrary, the US was unwilling to change plans for missile defence policies connected to the development of Iran's nuclear and missile programmes.

The decreased importance of bilateral nuclear military-security issues in US-Russian post-Cold War relations explains the flexibility of Washington's policymakers in this particular area. The Clinton and Obama administrations were, by and large, wary of significantly antagonising Russia over missile defences. The Bush administration, in contrast, pursued a more ambitious nuclear strategy and sought to decrease the political importance of mutually assured destruction. However, it remained flexible enough to enter into a legally binding international nuclear arms control treaty with Russia. The fact that officials in the Bush administration were willing to compromise on a transparency regime implied that the US flexibility on issues surrounding nuclear security was arguably greater than on a range of other foreign policy issues. Nevertheless, all US administrations were willing to unilaterally pursue the missile defence policies as they saw fit in light of the challenges coming from regional adversaries, particularly Iran. Compromises and concessions to Russia derived from the gap between ambitious BMD policy formulations and technological realities. In contrast to the Cold War era, Washington was unwilling to pursue political decisions to limit technological military advancements and preferred the military containment of regional adversaries over the potential stabilisation of great power relations.

The Impact of US Ballistic Missile Defence on US-Russian Relations

Whereas the above factors informed missile defence policies on both sides and serve as important background information, they do not in themselves explain why the impact of missile defence on other fields of cooperation and confrontation remained marginal. The thesis argued that US missile defence did not have a significant impact on other bilateral policy areas. In the field of non-proliferation and counter-proliferation toward North Korea and Iran, the thesis argued that the US and Russia detached policies on Iran from US missile defence. This observation accounts for Moscow's willingness to cooperate by curbing Tehran's alleged nuclear weapons programme, as well as Washington's continuation of missile defence deployment irrespective of developments in Iran. Likewise, whereas the Putin administration argued that Russia's suspension of the CFE Treaty arose from US missile defence policies, evidence suggests that both issues remained disconnected. Disputes over missile defence did, at best, indirectly affect conventional arms control in Europe by contributing to a devaluation of the CFE Treaty in the eyes of Russian policymakers.

Continuous consultations between the US and Russia over BMD at times helped to preserve bilateral ties. Considering the at times hostile bilateral relationship, as well as the absence of other cooperative projects, the fact that missile defence helped to preserve a Cold War-like approach to discussing nuclear matters can be interpreted as a stabilising feature in US-Russian relations. Missile defence disputes might have perpetuated the 'freezing' of the mutually assured destruction paradigm in US-Russian relations. However, missile defence also preserved Cold War deterrence thinking, which in turn developed into renewed Cold War-like confrontations. As such, the question over whether the nuclear deterrence paradigm should be extended into the future of US-Russian relations will be a defining issue that policymakers on both sides will have to deal with in the coming years.

In addition, from a crisis management perspective, unresolved missile defence issues did not stand in the way of enhanced approaches after NATO's Kosovo intervention in 1999 and the Russian-Georgian War in August 2008. In fact, on both occasions, missile defence cooperation overtures served as a re-entry point for US-Russian diplomatic exchanges. In this regard, the impact of missile defence did not trigger an overall downturn in bilateral relations. However, BMD did not turn it into a 'technological-military cooperation bracket' that could have fostered a sustainable long-term rapprochement (Stürmer, 2014).

US missile defence policies did not cause a nuclear arms race, either. It left the broader nuclear disarmament agenda largely untouched, even though missile defence influenced the direction of bilateral post-Cold War nuclear arms control. Nonetheless, US missile defence plans were a central, albeit not the only reason for the deadlock that emerged over START II ratification issues. The failure to ratify START II triggered a continuation of the MIRVing of Russian nuclear missiles.¹³ However, the failure of START II did not affect the wider bilateral relationship. First, the Moscow Treaty ensured the continuation of bilateral arms control talks. Second, from Washington's perspective, the MIRVing of Russian missiles was a desirable outcome, as it was meant to reassure Russia in light of Washington's missile defence plan. Third, from Russia's perspective, START II had been severely criticised for its imbalanced nature from the mid-1990s on. As such, the Russian military saw its failure as an opportunity to pursue a more flexible Russian nuclear policy in light of Moscow's economic difficulties. Likewise, whereas missile defence potentially complicated negotiations on New Start, both sides welcomed its eventual ratification, despite unresolved missile defence issues.

However, it is possible that Russia's more recent reluctance to follow the US lead for another round of bilateral nuclear reductions relates to unresolved missile defence disputes. In addition, leading nuclear experts argued that Russia's potential violation of the INF Treaty had its origins in a search for ways to counter US missile defence deployments in Europe. Recent developments suggest that missile defence is part of the reason why the US and Russia allegedly broke the agreements of the INF Treaty. At the same time, it is too early to foresee the potential crumbling of another Cold War arms control accord. Moreover, it is likely that current disputes over further nuclear reductions, the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons from European soil, and the adherence to the INF Treaty are related to numerous other factors.

Negative Impact on US-Russian relations

The thesis found that Russia's attempt to undermine US decisions often replicated zero-sum Cold War approaches. Cooperative efforts and discussions on transparency measures were either driven by the desire to undermine Washington's missile defence policies or were interpreted as such. As was the case in the Cold War, Russia reverted to the strengthening of arms control and multilateral pledges on 'strategic stability'. Russia deemed the diplomacy of pursuing

¹³ Nuclear arms control experts deem the existence of MIRVed missiles to be destabilising, as the very existence of the missiles could make Russia more inclined to pre-emptively launch its ground-based nuclear missiles in a crisis (Kristensen & Norris, 2014).

‘incremental’ gains by means of deception as a necessary step in undermining US aggressiveness, but the elements of bluffing were arguably anachronistic in a security environment in which both sides had radically shifted their outlook away from nuclear war scenarios. Moscow’s attempts to undermine US missile defence policies eventually increased the unwillingness among American and European policymakers to regard Russia’s viewpoints as viable. In addition, Moscow’s tendency to picture itself as a victim of US aggression when the military threat of US missile defence to Russian security remained highly unlikely decreased Europe’s willingness to take Russian complaints more seriously. Likewise, on the US side, Washington’s policymakers employed rhetoric that depicted Russia as a ‘Soviet-like’ aggressor and stressed the need to ‘protect’ European allies from Moscow’s aggression. Missile defence disputes increased the dichotomy in the security dialogue on both sides and accelerated the tendency to see the other side as hostile to one’s own national interests.

Missile defence talks also fostered mistrust and cynicism among American and Russian foreign policymakers. Numerous actions and reactions were based on attempts to undermine the legitimacy of the other side. As the thesis argued, this pattern was particularly visible in on-going rhetoric on missile defence cooperation. Whereas neither the US nor Russia were genuinely interested in compromising on their demands regarding missile defence cooperation, both sides consistently portrayed themselves as being willing to cooperate if the other side was only willing to agree to genuine talks. In addition, as the case studies showed, actions by the other side were often portrayed in negative terms, thereby deepening the antagonistic attitudes on both sides. US policymakers often perceived Russian actions as bluffs designed to undermine Washington’s policies, whereas officials in Moscow came to regard US overtures on missile defence as empty rhetoric at best. Ultimately, missile defence interactions increasingly reflected a public diplomacy ‘blame game’ in which both sides were eager to show their own good will while accusing the other side of failing to seek reasonable compromises.

As been argued in the previous chapters, Russian politicians were often taken aback by the style of US diplomacy, in particular under the George W. Bush administration, which led to a hardened stance on Russia’s side. Repeated American statements that Russia had nothing to fear from missile defences antagonised Russian policymakers, who regarded this rhetoric as an overtly patronising attempt to defy Russia’s security concerns. As a result, Russian policymakers and analysts developed a cynical attitude toward US policymaking, and alleged that Washington would not be honest and open.

On the US side, in turn, interactions with Russia on missile defence decreased the willingness among US policymakers to consider Russia as a consistently rational foreign policy actor and to interpret Moscow's diplomacy as an attempt to disturb US policies. The painting of the other side as 'irrational' exacerbated the hostile climate of US-Russian diplomacy. Moreover, as the diplomatic manoeuvres were increasingly interpreted as opaque, policymakers reverted to describing the other side's diplomacy as malign and non-cooperative. Russian policymakers saw the rhetoric on 'rogue states' often as a mere cover for American expansionism. Among US policymakers, Putin and Medvedev's opposition to missile defence was regarded as a means to justify increased defence spending and a way to disguise Russia's contempt about the policy preferences of Eastern European NATO states. As a result, the process surrounding discussions on US missile defence plans in itself led to a lasting 'poisoning of the framework in which diplomacy was pursued', as Podvig stressed (Podvig, 2014, pers. comm.). Diplomatic approaches to missile defence often resembled 'face saving' and 'red line' diplomacy, and became a fact of life in US-Russian relations.

The missile defence issue also preserved mutually antagonistic attitudes in domestic discourses, thereby ingraining stereotypes and mutual hostilities. Given the number of times the issue of the US (and later NATO) deployment of missile defences in Europe has been discussed in Russian media, the issue likely turned into one of the major examples of Western anti-Russian intent and aggression toward Moscow. Moreover, US missile defence policies undermined the authority of the small group of pro-Western policymakers who were unable to comprehend US missile defence policies. The perceived mismatch of US rhetoric and its military doctrine under George W. Bush, as well as the 'open-ended' nature of the project, fed into interpretations of there being an American 'encirclement strategy' against Russia. In the US, officials and think tanks employed missile defences to foster the image of Russia as a security risk for Washington's Eastern European allies. US Republican demands for a global missile defence system and the emphasis on US-Polish ties exacerbated the anti-Russian sentiments among Washington's policy community.

Hardliners on both sides could use the complicated technological nature of missile defence to support their viewpoints. As Podvig maintained, 'One specific characteristic about BMD is that it opened up the possibilities to various claims that are almost impossible to disapprove' (Podvig, 2014, pers. comm.). The particular characteristics of missile defence, such as the undefined

effectiveness of the effectiveness to intercept long-range missiles as well as the utility of space-based components reflected the possibility to manipulate arguments based on complicated and often poorly understood technological factors of missile defence. In the case of Russia, US missile defence often served as a tool to justify Russian nuclear modernisation programmes. In the US, missile defence proponents promoted their agendas, at times explicitly using the image of Russia as a 'proliferation problem'. The domestic elevation of BMD as a central foreign policy issue was, at the same time, a means by which the political opposition could foster group interests. Their influence was enhanced by the fragmentation of US and Russian foreign policy in the 1990s.

The thesis argued that international BMD encounters were at times flexibly handled by the respective executives along the lines of broader foreign policy interests. Nevertheless, as missile defence remained one of the most politicised national security issues in Russia, as well as in the United States, political reconciliation by the heads of state remained difficult to accomplish. Given the detachment of missile defence from other contentious foreign policy issues, it can be argued that the domestic impact of BMD involving multiple stakeholders and both legislatures has been greater than the foreign policy impact that was broadly determined and filtered by the executives, and first and foremost by the presidents themselves. However, the utilisation of missile defence in domestic policies occasionally increased the willingness of both executives to meet domestic demands, thereby undermining their manoeuvrability in bilateral cooperation and transparency efforts.¹⁴

Lastly, consultations often perpetuated grievances without leading to appropriate ways to focus on arguably more contentious issues in bilateral relations. When Russia's role in Euro-Atlantic security was linked to missile defence cooperation efforts, continuing discrepancies in terms of European security architecture were not addressed. Instead, both sides returned to previous patterns of focusing on the military impact of US missile defence on Russia's military security. As such, the perpetuation of missile defence discussions in the post-Cold War era drained diplomatic and political resources that could have been employed in more constructive approaches based on more fundamental short- and medium-term security challenges (Lukyanov, 2012a).

¹⁴ This finding does not exclude the likelihood that the executives on both sides also tactically utilised the existence of domestic pressure in their diplomatic approaches.

The Impact of US Ballistic Missile Defence on NATO-Russia Relations

Regarding the mechanisms of the Euro-Atlantic security sphere in the field of missile defence, the thesis found that missile defence contributed to establishing the division of the Euro-Atlantic security space. Second, the thesis found that European Union and European NATO member states played a marginal role in US-Russian missile defence diplomacy, despite the fact that the project directly affected the setting of European-US-Russian relations. NATO's institutional role and the role of European NATO states in shaping US-Russian disputes remained minor, mostly serving as a platform for US-Russian disputes on missile defence.

The marginal role of European NATO states was based on multiple factors. First and foremost, European NATO states regarded the US as the central security provider for Europe, and therefore rejected any substantial challenge of Washington's policies. As long as European NATO states were included in the US missile defence system, Europe was generally satisfied. Equally important was the fact that European NATO states were divided with regard to US missile defence systems. The inclusion of Eastern European states, first and foremost Poland, shifted the previous scepticism surrounding BMD, even though cracks on European BMD policies emerged prior to Washington's enhancement of the strategic role of Poland and the Czech Republic. Multiple European states used missile defence to grow their ties with the US, to the detriment of a more comprehensive European policy formulation. Additionally, the US was prone to side-line the transatlantic alliance in its missile defence policy to decrease complications related to deployment plans. The NATOisation of missile defence under the Obama administration only cosmetically changed the prevailing US position in NATO-Russian discussions on missile defence. Finally, NATO Europe did not regard missile defence to be a pivotal security issue in NATO-Russian relations and was therefore prone to de-emphasise its importance. As has been shown, Germany valued its opposition to NATO expansion to include Ukraine and Georgia, as well as the removal of tactical nuclear weapons from European soil, more than a resolution on BMD, whereas the UK and France eventually consented to US policies as long as they would foster the bilateral relationship.

Europe's marginalisation in the field of missile defence policies eventually resulted in the replication of its bandwagoning approach with Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI). Whereas in the Cold War, Europe eventually consented to Star Wars because of the existential Soviet threat to its existence, in the post-Cold War era Europe supported US policies despite the

lack of an existential threat emanating from Russia. At the same time, missile defence policies resulted in a replication of NATO's Cold War paradigm to keep Russia out, the United States in, and Germany's formulation of its strategic ambitions down. As such, US missile defence policies inadvertently perpetuated NATO's initial Cold War outlook and served as a stumbling block for closer US-Russian ties.¹⁵

While the overall role of Europe in US-Russian missile defence disputes remained minor and European policies continued to be defined by Washington, Europe nevertheless remained an important reference for the formulation of US and Russian missile defence policies. For Russian policymakers, missile defence was used to test how far Europe would be willing and able to diverge from Washington's lead. The thesis showed that these efforts were not necessarily an attempt to divide the alliance, but an effort to foster a more inclusive European security space by means of missile defence discussions. In addition, Moscow's attempts to undermine US missile defence policies by means of nuclear arms control, non-proliferation efforts, and military threat-making were partly shaped by the desire to win over European opinions and show European policymakers the consequences of following the US on missile defence policy. Whereas European support for missile defence eventually induced Russia to lower its opposition to US missile defence policies, the last case study showed that the overall hostility to the existence of NATO meant that Moscow did not regard European stances toward US missile defence as a crucial factor in Russia's diplomatic strategy.

For US policymakers, the European role in US BMD policies mainly arose from domestic deliberations on missile defence policies. As such, Democrats and Republicans alike made use of the scepticism and support of single NATO member states to foster their respective policy preferences. However, with the exception of the deferment of the third missile defence site installation in Poland and the Czech Republic in 2007 and 2008, where NATO allies seriously complicated US intentions, the emphasis on European interests served more as a means to support Washington's missile defence agendas. European states did not shape US policies as such. In fact, both the Bush and Obama administrations regarded US missile defence policies as a largely American project that only allowed for small alterations by the European allies. In addition, whereas Europe's initial scepticism toward the end of the ABM Treaty influenced

¹⁵ Whereas it is questionable whether the Obama administration pursued a grand geostrategic design with regard to the stationing of BMD in Europe (the Clinton administration never aimed at stationing BMD in other parts of the world), the thesis argued that parts of the Bush administration's officials were eager to foster closer US-Eastern European relations through BMD cooperation at the expense of NATO-Russian relations.

Washington's diplomatic strategies by fostering a more intense dialogue with Europe, US missile defence policies toward Europe remained essentially tactical without questioning the broader aims of US policies.

The primary finding of this thesis is that missile defence did not significantly affect NATO-Europe's relationship with Russia. The impact of US missile defence on European-Russian relations lay in exemplifying the fact that the partial inclusion of Russia into NATO structures in 1997 and 2002 did not contribute to a more inclusive functioning of the Euro-Atlantic security framework. Although Russia was able to voice its opposition to US missile defence plans in Eastern Europe, its objections did not contribute to a more balanced policy.

Russia was deprived of a more active role in the common institutional framework as long as missile defence discussions remained predetermined NATO gatherings. In fact, the practical mechanisms of NATO did not allow for a full-fledged inclusion of Russia into strategic deliberations. As such, the very existence of NATO deepened the dichotomy of strategic narratives between insiders and outsiders of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. This development was particularly visible, with the increasing notion that Moscow would seek to divide the alliance. BMD-related policies thus revealed the incapacity of NATO to have a meaningful impact on the US-Russian and NATO-European-Russian relationship in the field of security. This, in turn, weakened the allegedly inclusive character of the post-Cold War framework of Euro-Atlantic security.

The consequence of Europe's reluctance to more forcefully oppose US policies was initially comforting, as Russia sought to shape European opinions through closer institutional cooperation with NATO. However, from the mid-2000s on, US missile defence policies contributed to Russia's negative attitude toward the very existence of the transatlantic alliance and increased its hostility toward US policies related to the European security sphere. Russia regarded diplomatic encounters surrounding missile defence within NATO as unsettling, in particular with regard to the Eastern European opposition to Russian security demands.

More importantly, Moscow came to see NATO's missile defence policies as a mere 'cover' for US policy preferences. Whereas Russia had previously sought to bolster European support for Russia's missile defence policies, Moscow eventually gave up on regarding individual European NATO members as viable actors to talk to, and instead opted to entirely cut off ties with the

alliance over missile defence. As such, the slow pace of missile defence discussions in terms of transparency and cooperation contributed to Moscow's interpretation of the NATO-Russian Council as an institution that would merely be a distraction from deeply ingrained strategic differences with the United States. On the 'Western' side, Russia's increasing unwillingness to continue collaborative efforts in the field of theatre missile defence cooperation contributed to a Russia fatigue and lowered the willingness of NATO member states to seek compromise with Russia. In addition, the working level consultations between NATO member states and NATO and Russia fostered the unity of alliance member states, while Russian concerns were treated as a secondary issue to the more unified NATO.

At the same time, US missile defence also added a major geopolitical irritant to US-Russian relations in the post-Cold War era. The central issue of US missile defence from the mid-2000s on was not the military impact of missile defence on NATO-Russian relations, but differences in dealing with the newfound sovereignty of former Warsaw Pact states. The stationing of missile defences in Eastern European states increased rhetorical antagonisms and reflected US and Russian disputes over the right of Eastern European states to station permanent US military equipment in Eastern Europe and over the sovereignty of Eastern European security policies. It also reflected the desire of states like Poland to reverse some of the mechanisms and rules of the NATO-Russia Founding Act.

In addition, US and Russian attempts to increase the support of individual European NATO member states led to Cold War-patterns of seeking to win over the support of Europe. Missile defence disputes were thus representative of Sakwa's observation that 'the security of the [European] continent is [...] imperilled by precisely the hypertrophy of the security structures that were created to ensure that security' (Sakwa, 2008: 256). This development, in turn, was spurned by Russia's continuous rhetorical threats regarding the stationing of nuclear tipped missiles in the Kaliningrad area and the targeting of European missile defence sites.

From Russia's perspective, the deployment of US missile defence systems in Europe was a conscious US effort to pit Russia against European NATO member states and, therefore, to avoid a more inclusive debate on European security. At the same time, the stationing of missile defences in the territory of former Warsaw Pact states was seen as only one part of a broader US strategy regarding the extension of the Western Cold War alliance toward Russian borders.

In addition, public rhetoric often contradicted actual developments in the field of missile defence cooperation. The fact that NATO endorsed cooperation with Russia on missile defence as a 'historic step' after Moscow had voiced its objection to the very existence of the transatlantic alliance, the overtures were arguably little more than a public relations battle or a 'propagandistic' step, as Russian officials would have it. The discrepancy between public rhetoric and actual policy considerations increased cynicism on both sides.

At the same time, while the expansion of NATO brought members with their own sectarian historical and political agendas into the alliance, the thesis found that the mechanisms of US-Eastern European relations were not as clear-cut as is commonly alleged. In fact, the second case study found that Poland significantly complicated the swift US deployment of missile defences in Europe, therefore showing the limitations to the unilateral US aims of the George W. Bush administration.

Concluding Remarks and Outlook

Even if nuclear-related matters will increase in importance in the wake of the US-Russian and European-Russian conflict over the domestic developments in Ukraine from 2014 on, a serious US-Russian confrontation in the form of extensive military build-ups is unlikely. Important factors speak against the likelihood of missile defence turning into a central security issue between the US and Russia. First, from the outset of missile defence deployments throughout the Cold War, BMD has been a highly contested subject area in the US. As was the case in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, US Democrats and the US arms control community will continue their scepticism toward long-range missile defence build-ups. Given the persistent domestic opposition in the US, it is unlikely that policymakers will at any conceivable time have the capacity to push for a programme that would go beyond anything the US has so far attempted in the field of missile defence. In fact, neither the Clinton nor the Obama administration showed particular interest in the shape of Russia's current and future nuclear arsenal; furthermore, the New Start Treaty has given Russia the comparative advantage of not having to downsize its nuclear warheads, delivery systems, and tactical nuclear weapons arsenal. In Russia, missile defence has mostly been conceived as limited in its impact, even though Russia has begun to develop and deploy counter-measures against US defences. The increasing emphasis on tactical nuclear weapons relates to their role in potential future conventional war fighting scenarios, while the relevance of US BMD for Moscow's TNW-related strategies is remote.

Despite the recent confrontations between the US and Russia, the international security landscape is not dominated by bilateral confrontations between two superpowers, but by various other challenges, such as state fragility in the Middle East and the rise of China. As such, neither Russia nor the USA are likely to solely confront the respective other side, as was the case throughout the Cold War. Additionally, the security landscape of the 21st century is dominated by challenges that are only indirectly related to the planning of massive retaliatory nuclear war scenarios. Instead, confrontations by means of economic warfare (sanctions), hybrid warfare, and migration policies have been on the rise. Lastly, neither the US nor Russia will arguably have the conceivable means or the intent to militarily outspend the other side so as to gain nuclear superiority.

It is misleading to conceive the current crisis over Ukraine and the increase of nuclear and missile defence rhetoric as different from other post-Cold War crises in which missile defence shifted into the centre of attention. Despite the growing attention that Russia adheres to military counter-measures that mostly followed the logic of military modernisation regardless of Washington's BMD policies, BMD will remain a diplomatic issue. US BMD is likely to continue to play its role as a highly politicised stumbling block and will perpetuate the political division of the Euro-Atlantic security sphere.

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Arbatova, Nadia – Head of Department on European Political Studies Institute for World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) in Moscow, 10 October 2014.

Assistant to US Congressional involved in nuclear policies throughout the 1990s, 18 August 2012

Blank, Stephen – Senior Fellow for Russia, American Foreign Policy Council in Washington D.C., 6 June 2014

Buzhinsky, Evgeny – Senior Vice President of the Russian Center for Policy Studies (PIR). He served in various positions in the Russian Ministry of Defence, including head of the International Treaty Department (2001 – 2009), 10 October 2014

Durcalek, Jacek – Analyst at the European Security and Defence Economics Project of the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), previously working at the Polish Ministry of National Defense. Durcalek specialises in arms control, nuclear disarmament, WMD proliferation, missile defence, NATO's defence and deterrence policy and Polish security policy, 1 August 2014.

German Diplomat involved in nuclear arms control and arms reduction policies at the Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt)

Isaacs, John – Acting Executive Director at the Center for Arms Control & Non-Proliferation in Washington D.C., 12 June 2012

Ivanov, Oleg - Vice Rector of the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 8 October 2014.

Kamp, Karl-Heinz - Academic Director of the German Federal Academy for Security Policy (BAKS). From November 2007 to October 2013 he served as the Research Director of the NATO Defense College (NDC) in Rome to build up NATO's Research Division, 13 May 2014

Kozin, Vladimir - Chief advisor, head of advisory group to director at the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS) in Moscow, 7 October 2014

Kulesa, Lukasz (a) - Research Director at the European Leadership Network. Previously, he worked as the Head of the Non-proliferation and Arms Control Project at the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), focusing on perspectives for nuclear disarmament, Russian security policy, nuclear and conventional deterrence, the role of missile defence, and the future of arms control systems, 20 May 2014

Lilly, Bilyana (a) – Analyst at Oxford Analytica, 20 September 2014

Mankoff, Jeffrey (a) – Deputy director and senior fellow with the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C., 30 August 2012

Miller, James N. – US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (2012 – 2014), 1 June 2014

NATO Diplomat involved in nuclear security issues, 22 May 2014

Pacula, Przemyslaw – International Security Expert, National Security Council of Poland, 30 June 2014

Pifer, Steven – Director of the Brookings Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Initiative and a senior fellow in the Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence and the Center on the United States and Europe in the Foreign Policy programme at Brookings, former ambassador to Ukraine, 5 June 2014.

Pisarski, Zbigniew – Founder & President of the Casimir Pulaski Foundation in Warsaw, Poland, 2 July 2014

Podvig, Pavel (b) – Senior Research Fellow at the UN Institute for Disarmament Research and a researcher with the Program on Science and Global Security at Princeton University. In recognition of his work in Russia, the American Physical Society awarded him the Leo Szilard Lectureship Award of 2008, 28 August 2014

Expert on Missile Defence, 2014.

Richter, Wolfgang – Senior Associate at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Head of the military section of the Permanent Representation of Germany to the OSCE, Vienna (2005 – 2009), 30 August 2012

Roberts, Brad – US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy (2009 – 2013), 7 July 2014

Sokov, Nicolai (b) – Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. Sokov worked at the Institute of US and Canadian Studies and the Institute of World Economy and International Relations in Moscow. From 1987-92 he worked at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union and later Russia, and participated in START I and START II negotiations as well as in a number of summit and ministerial meetings, 26 August 2014.

Sutyagin, Igor (b) – Research Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies in London, 2 February 2013

Thielmann, Greg (a) – Senior analysts at the Arms Control Association. He was previously a U.S. Foreign Service Officer for 25 years, last serving as Director of the Strategic, Proliferation and Military Affairs Office in the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, 11 June 2014

Topychkanov, Petr – Associate in the Carnegie Moscow Center's Nonproliferation Program, 6 October 2014

Troitskiy, Mikhail – Deputy director at MacArthur Foundation's Moscow office and an associate professor at the Moscow Institute of International Relations, 7 October 2014

Waszczykowski, Witold – Foreign Minister of Poland (2015 -), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (2005 – 2008). Waszczykowski served as the chief negotiator with the United States on missile defence, 2 July 2014.

US Diplomat at the US State Department involved in missile defence discussions with Russia from the early 2000s onwards, 3 June 2014

US Diplomat (b) at the US State Department involved in bilateral nuclear arms control, 3 June 2014

Zadra, Roberto (b) – Head of the Ballistic Missile Defence Section in NATO's Defence Investment Division (2011 -), 22 May 2014